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Wijitapure Wimalaratana

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Changes in Consumption Pattern and Economic Underdevelopment in British Ceylon

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de Sociale Wetenschappen

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Wijitapure Wimalaratana

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Abstract

Consumer studies have gained a new momentum in recent years and are becoming popular in a number of social science disciplines. This research work attempts to re-examine the role of consumption in the historical economic transformation which took place in European colonies, taking British Ceylon as a case study. Although the discussions on theoretical matters are heavily dependent on economics, other social science disciplines have not been overlooked. Similarly, the area of discussion of the case study has often gone beyond mere economic matters.

The information for the work was collected mainly from archival sources. After a brief review of development literature, the thesis begins with an examination of the rational consumer, consumption and the dominant consumer theories, as found in main stream economics. This is followed by an alternative analytical framework designed to trace the historical roots of current economic underdevelopment. The main thrust of the analytical framework is to establish a theoretical relationship between changes in consumption patterns and economic underdevelopment. The point of departure is consumption in contrast to existing theories which start their analysis from production.

The case study starts with an investigation of the pre British consumption patterns of Ceylon. It starts with the first recorded king of the island's history and proceeds through the maritime administration of the Portuguese, the Dutch and, finally, the subjugation of the last Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy by the British. The traditional consumption patterns predominantly persisted in the island throughout this entire period. They are the expression of the subsistence economy in the alternative analytical framework.

The changes brought about in the traditional consumption patterns of the island during the British administration are extensively discussed. The major areas covered are the consumption of rice, dry grains, wheat flour, cane sugar and coarse sugar, fruit and vegetables, fish and meat, game, beverages and intoxicants, health and hygiene, lighting and cleaning agents, textiles, clothing and ornaments, houses and household utensils. A few appendices at the end of the work address a number of issues pertaining to the consumption and economic underdevelopment of the island. The changes brought about in consumer goods and services during the period of investigation are examined in the light of the major aspects of the changes in consumption patterns and the responses to them by

consumers, as explained in the alternative analytical framework. The major aspects of the changes in consumption or the *ex ante* analyses are identified as diversion of consumption, creation of consumption, disturbing consumption and exhaustive consumption. The responses to them, or the *ex post* analyses, are identified as defiant response, creative response, adaptive response and barren response.

The conclusions of the work present the results of testing the empirical information against the alternative analytical framework. The extent of the impact of changes in consumption pattern on the allocation of resources, production and economic growth/development are examined, paying particular regard to whether the important changes brought about by this process accord with the philosophy advanced by international trade theories in mainstream economics. We conclude that there are reasonable grounds to argue that the changes in consumption pattern contributed for the economic underdevelopment of British Ceylon. The historical consumer experiences of a number of countries other than Ceylon were taken into consideration in the theoretical framework, in addition to our conclusions, in order to strengthen certain arguments.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a product of the support and encouragement of many individuals, as well as of the facilities provided by a number of organizations and institutions. Prof. W. D. Laksman, former vice chancellor of the University of Colombo, has always been a source of inspiration and encouragement. He is solely responsible for directing me, not only towards economic history, but also to the British period in Sri Lanka. If not for him, I would have been ended in another branch of economics. Sarath Vidanagama, head of the Department of Economics, University of Colombo played no small role in this endeavour. Thanks are also due to all my colleagues at the Department of Economics and some of them should be mentioned here by name. Among them, Dr. Amala de Silva, Dr. Athula Ranasinghe, Dr. Sirimal Abeyratne, Ranjith Bandara, M. Ganeshamoorthy, D. A. C. Silva, S. P. Premaratne, Chandana Aluthage and Prasad Serasinghe supported me at a number of stages of my study. Among the clerical staff of the Department of Economics, the secretary Seetha Gunaratne and others and the staff of the Academic Branch of the College House and of the UC-ISS project office in Colombo should also be mentioned here.

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June 2000

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Glossary

-A-

Aba	mustard.
Adigar	chief native headman in the *Tamil* districts
Alloways	a variety of traditional sweet
Amaranga	a tree or products of the said tree
Ambalama	local rest house, road-side shed
Ambelo	a tree or products of the said tree
Amu	a variety of fine grain.
Anabim	pasture grounds.
Angulu	double canoes.
Arachchi, Aratchy	village officer, sergent.
Arrack	spirituous liquor distilled from fermented coconut sap, coconut whisky
Asana sala	common assemblies
Asana	chairs and seats.
Asweddumization	tillage
Ayagam	villages paid taxes to the king

-B-

Batgam	villages granted to individuals (by *Sinhalese* kings).
Batmula	a meal packet (of rice and curry).
Bazaars, Bazar	street of stalls or a small market area.
Beminittiyasaya	great famine occurred in the first century AC.
Beravayo	tom tom beaters or drummers
Bevila	a (herbal) plant.
Bihi	barns.
Bojana sala	guest houses.
Boutique	small shop or grocery.
Brahmin(s)	member(s) of the highest or priestly caste among the *Hindus*
Burgers	descendants from Dutch and Europeans.
Bushel	an unit of dry measure (0 03637 cubic metres).

-C-

Caballa	a tree or products of the said tree.
Cachoi	a kind of coarse cloth.
Cambaya, Camboy(s),Comboy	a long lower garment worn by men or women.
Cande Uda	Kandy.
Caown	a variety of traditional sweet.
Carolla	a tree or products of the said tree.
Chaliya, Chalia	*salagama* caste, caste of cinnamon peelers, caste of weavers in the southern provinces.
Chatty	clay-vessels, clay- pots.
Chaya root(s), Choy root(s)	dyer's roots.
Chekku(s)	native oil mill(s).
Cheelai	Sari or saree.
Chena	slash and burn cultivation.
Choultries	rest house in India.
Chingulay(s)	same as *Sinhalese*.
Choy-roots	same as *chaya* roots.
Cinglese, Cingalese, Cingulays	same as *Sinhalese*.
Cocoa	coconut (in old writings).
Coolees, Coolly, cooly	wage labourers.
Conde	hair.
Copperah	dried coconut kernel.
Culavamsa	the petite chronicle of Ceylon.
Cunji	porridge.

-D-

Dabim	game preserves.
Del	bread-fruit.
Dewals	temples built for deities.
Dhoni	small boats
Dikiri	curd, curdled milk.
Disawa, Dissawa, Dissawe	province or provincial officer, governor of a province, head of a Dissawany.
Dong(s)	a tree or products of the said tree.

-E-

El we, el wi, el vi	hill-paddy, hill-rice
Etirili	bed sheets or spreads made from cloths
Eurasians	descendants from Europeans or descendats of intermariages between natives and Europeans

-G-

Gamas, Gam	villages
Gamsabhawa	village council
Ganga	river(s)
Ganja	cannabis
Gangoda	residential part of the village
Gedera	household, home
Gee, ghee	a kind of liquid butter esp milk from a buffalo or cow
Gini kona	fire end, south-east
Giniyam, giniyama	heating nature of the body
Goda we	high land rice
Gopalugam	villages occupied by herdsmen
Goygama	high cultivators' caste, Vellala caste
Goyiya	cultivator
Gram pulses	green gram, chick pea etc
Greco-Arab medicine	medicine introduced to the island by Moslems
Gurula	a (herbal) plant

-H-

Hiromeny	coconut grater
Hondarawalu	a variety of paddy

-I-

Idalirungu	sorghum

-J-

Jack(s), jak	a tree or products of the said tree, *artocarpus integrifolia*
Jagary, jaggary, Jaggery	coarse sugar, decocted sugar (made from palm sap)
Janapada	districts
Janela	windows

-K-

Kada	pingo
Kanganies	labour contractors (in the plantations)
Kapukkanas	a (herbal) plant
Kapu Kapana Yantra	cotton gin
Kapu Katina Yantra	cotton spinning wheel
Karawa	fishers' caste
Katuala	a variety of wild yam
Kekiri	a variety of cucumber
Kekuna	candle nut tree
Kevattas, Kewattas	fishermen
Kinnara(s)	mat weavers' caste
Kittul	a kind of palm
Koku ulu	hooked tiles
Kollu	a variety of fine grain
Konde	same as Conde
Korala, Korale	superior headman next to chief native headman in the Kandyan Sinhalese districts, administration division
Kumbal	potters, potters' caste
Kulikarayo	wage labourers
Kumbalgeya	maternity home
Kumburuyaya	stretch of paddy field
Kundalabarana, Kundalabharana	ear ornaments
Kurakkan, Kurahan	finger millet, a variety of fine grain
Kuru yahana	low beds

-L-

Lac(s)	one hundred thousand
Landesi	a variety of fine grain
Lanka	Ceylon
Lekam mitiya	Sinhalese registers of villages and royal departments
Lipa	fireplace or hearth
Lula	a variety of fresh water fish

-M-

Ma	flour made from dried palmyra roots
Ma dela	large fishing net
Madige	transport department of Sinhalese king
Madu	mead
Maduwa	hut, shed, sometimes local rest house or grain store
Maha	great harvest (reaped in March-April)
Maha Mudaliyar	great provincial officer
Mahavamsa, Mahawanso	the great chronicle of Ceylon
Malabar	Tamil
Mandapa	pavilions
Maniagar	same as *Adigar*
Mee	a tree or products of the said tree
Meda	(cultivation) middle harvest (reaped in June-July)
Meneri	a variety of fine grain, Indian millet
Moors	Moslem
Mudaliar, Mudaliyar, Moodaliar	chief native headman in maritime Sinhalese districts
Muhandiram(s), Mohandiram	assistant(s) of Mudaliyar, lieut
Mukkuvar, Mukkuwa	fishers' caste of Tamil
Mun	green gram, green peas
Murain	a cattle decease
Murunga	drum-sticks, a variety of vegetable
Murros	a tree or products of the said tree
Muttusamba	a variety of paddy

-N-

Nagara	cities.
Natchenny, Natcherin	same as *kurakkan* .
Natu Maranthu	medicine introduced to the island by the South Indian Dravidians.
Nelun batu	lotus seeds.
Nul dela	fishing net made of threads or strings.

-O-

Oggulas	a variety of traditional sweets.
Oru	boats.
Ola books	books written on slips of the leaf of palmyrah, or talipot tree by means of iron stylus.
Olu-hal	seeds of water lily, tank rice.
Olupity	stalks of water lily.
Owita(s)	heath(s), head land(s), reservation land(s).

-P-

Pahuru	rafts.
Pangu	individual's shares in a paddy field or chena.
Pansala	Buddhist monastery.
Parangi	Yaws, Spanish Pox, a disease.
Pariaris	native physician in Tamil districts.
Pasu	barges.
Pathaha	irrigation pond or pit.
Patunugam	seaport towns.
Pattu	part of a Korala, sub-district, division.
Payaru	similar to *mun*.
Pirivena	educational institute located in a Buddhist monastary.
Pittu	a kind of cake made (mostly) from *kurakkan* or rice flour.
Pola	weekly fair.
Punaddu	dried juice of palmyra fruits.

-R-

Rack	same as *arrack.*
Raja	king or royal.
Raja Rata	ancient civilisation, ancient period.
Rajaka	washermen, washers' caste.
Rajakariya	service tenure, king's service.
Rajjuruwo	same as *Raja.*
Ratemahatmaya, Ratemahattaya	chief native headman in the Kandyan districts, chief of a smaller province.
Raiyat(s)	cultivator(s).
Redda, (pl. redi)	cloth.
Rindepest	a cattle disease.
Rishi(s)	saint(s).
Roti	a food prepared(mainly) from *kurakkan* flour.

-S-

Sahib(s)	gentleman.
Saka	(potter's) wheel.
Sakya	the Buddha.
Sami	a variety of grain.
Sarasvatimandapaya	a pavilion with that name.
Sarong(s)	a lower garment of males.
Sayam	dye.
Siddha system	same as *Natu Maranthu*
Sinhalese	the largest community in Ceylon.
Sripada	Adam's peak.
Sunna	lime-burners' caste.

-T-

Tala	gingily, sesame.
Talapa	porridge.
Tamils	the second largest community in Ceylon.
Tana	a variety of fine grain.
Tattumaru	rotation of cultivation right.
Tavalam, tawalam	bullock cart.

Thansi kale	forbidden forest
Teliyya, Tellegie	unfermented juice drawn from palm trees
Tembili	cocnuts with yellowish a skin, king cocnuts
Tisbamba	cleared space (in the forest)
Toddy	fermented palm sap
Totamuna	unsheltered port

-U-

Udaiyar	superior headman next to chief native headman in Tamil districts
Uluntu, Ulundhu	a variety of dry grain
Unani system	same as Greco-Arab medicine

-V-

Valavva	manor house
Vanantar, Vanantara	forests
Vanniya	same as adigar, chief in the Vanni
Varaku	a variety of fine grain
Vedamahatmaya, Vedarala	native or indigenous physician
Vellala	same as *Goygama*
Veni sala	recreation halls
Vidane Arachchi	superior headman next to chief native headman in maritime Sinhalese districts
Vihare, (pl Vihara)	Buddhist shrine, Buddhist monastery

-W-

Wadia(s), Wadiya	(mostly) fishing camp(s)
Walawwa	same as *valavva*
Walaya	a variety of fresh water fish
Wattoruwa vedakama	a system of medicine in the island before Vijaya
Wellalas	same as *Goygama*
Wihare	same as *vihare*
Woodapple	a variety of fruit with a hard skin

-Y-

Yahana	beds
Yala	small harvest (reaped in August-September)

Acronyms

AR	Administration Report.
AG	Government Agent.
AGA	Assistant Government Agent.
CO	Colonial Office archives at the Public Record Office.
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific.
GNP	Gross National Product.
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and development.
JRAS	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society.
Lb	Libra (weigh equivalent to 450 grams).
LCH	Life Cycle Hypothesis.
MOH's	Medical Officer of Health.
NNP	Net National Product.
Re /Rs	Rupees (Rupee), an unit of currency; 100cents = 1 Re.
SP	Sessional Papers.
UN	United Nations

1

Introduction

This thesis has three major goals. Firstly, to examine a few selected major consumption concepts and theories, with special reference to economics. Secondly, to investigate the changes brought about in consumption patterns in former colonies. Thirdly, to formulate an alternative analytical framework for tracing the roots of current economic underdevelopment in the context of consumption. The book is divided into five main parts. The first part gives the theoretical background, the second part describes the pre-colonial consumption patterns, the third part discusses the changes brought about in consumption patterns during the colonial period, the fourth part comprises the conclusions and the fifth part consists of some appendices dealing with certain selected topics.

The role of consumption has become a widely debated topic in a number of disciplines in recent years, and the priority of study has been given to certain core aspects of the phenomenon accordingly. The center of gravity in this study is economic history, although other disciplines in the social sciences, which are either closely or distantly related to the subject, have naturally been drawn upon. The case study of the thesis is British Ceylon and so a major portion of the discussion is about the historical experience of Ceylon. The experiences of other countries are mostly taken into account in the theoretical framework and in the conclusions when and where necessary. To formulate a fully-fledged general theory on changes in consumption pattern and underdevelopment is beyond our grasp at this stage. The recurrent consumption expenditure of the public sector and of institutions and firms, although important, has been ignored in order to keep the discussion within manageable limits.

The remainder of the introductory remarks can be broadly divided into three distinctive parts. The first part covers economic development and underdevelopment, paying special attention to economics literature. The second part consists of a brief methodological note on economic history and

our research work, while the final part embodies a summary of the rest of the work Development studies have produced a copious literature Everyone has his own theories and accepted and respected study areas, so that the reader may have the impression that some essential parts of the literature have not been included here This is no more than a strategy to keep our discussion within manageable limits

1.1 Development Studies: *an offshoot of the social science domain*

1.1.1 Development Economics: *bird's eye view*

The study of economic development is one of the major branches of the social science domain More often than not, the area of study has gone beyond the pure economic factors Development literature, in comparison with many other branches of study, is full of new and old theories, concepts, reports, criticisms and proposals It is also one of the highly contentious branches of study in all the social science disciplines There are occasions on which pure sciences have become directly involved with development studies Economics, like some of the other social sciences, has a long history of studying development issues and it includes a separate branch of study for this purpose called development economics

The study of economic development is one of the most exciting and challenging branches of the broader discipline of economics and political economy [1] It has also become one of the central issues in most of the other disciplines in the social sciences There is perhaps no other social objective that is so almost unanimously accepted today as that of economic development 2 It has become a major issue in international politics as well [3] Development economics is not a new subject that has emerged in the postwar period, but is one which has a long history with remarkable powers

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[1]Todaro, Michael P 'Current Issues in Economic Development,' *Reflection on Economic Development The Selected Essays of Michael P Todaro,* Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Hants, 1995, p 442

2 Wallerstein, I 'Development Lodestar or Illusion' , in L Sklair (ed), *Capitalism and Development*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 3

[3] Adelman, Irma *Theories of Economic Growth and Development*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1961, p 1, The work mainly covers the process of economic development in the light of several prominent models, both classical and neoclassical, and the author uses mathematical models to explain classical theories

of resilience.[4] A fully-fledged intellectual debate about how countries might be developed was taking place at least as early as the seventeenth century and the proposed policies are grouped together today under the heading of mercantilism.[5] The French Physiocrats wrote more elaborately on this topic after the mercantilists, although they gave undue prominence to the role of agriculture.[6]

Adam Smith and the modern economist perceived that growth is the outcome of a logical process and both have searched for some laws and generalizations.[7] The logical growth process is explained by growth theories in restrictive frameworks. Theories of growth range from historical theories to specific theories of production and growth.[8] It is maintained that economic growth theories started with the writings of the British classical economists in the second half of the eighteenth century. These authors were writing at a time when modern economic growth was just starting in the western countries.[9] In one sense, the origin of the phrase 'economic development' in English would seem to be the first English translation of Karl Marx's Capital in 1887.[10] The classical writings are characterized by their pioneering work in studying economic growth in essentially dynamic terms.[11] The early growth theories on pre-industrial western economies

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4 Dutt, Amitava Krishna 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', in Amitava Krisna Dut and Kenneth P Jameson (eds), *New Descriptions in Development Economics*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Hants, 1992, p 3

5 Wallerstein, I 'Development Lodestar or Illusion' , in L Sklair (ed), *Capitalism and Development*, Routledge, London, 1994, p 4

6 Francois Quesnay, for example, admitted that the path to growth would lie in the accumulation of capital and the source of new capital is identified in the community's disposable surplus which derives only from the agricultural sector in the economy See Hollander, Samuel *Classical Economics*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, p 52

7 Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p 90

8 Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p 42

9 Sundrum, R M *Economic Growth in Theory and Practice*, The Macmillan Press Limited, London, 1990, p 5

10 Arndt, H W ,'Economic Development A Semantic History', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol 29, no 3, April, 1981, p. 495

11 Sundrum, R M *Economic Growth in Theory and Practice*, p 5, There were considerable differences even among the major contributors to the classical school of thought about the growth mechanism Savings (capital accumulation) was widely accepted as the engine of growth in their three factors of production - land, labor and capital - growth model They assumed that only capitalists could save, since workers are essentially poor and landlords are essentially wasteful

were largely concerned with agriculture, and examined the effects of population growth on limited natural resources, mainly cultivable land. Under these conditions, the process of growth was dominated by the law of diminishing returns and the main conclusion drawn from their theories was that there would be a steady decline in the rate of economic growth until it ceased completely in the classical stationary state.[12]

It is true that development economics has a preoccupation with the old growth economics of classical and neoclassical economists, but development economists have gone beyond their classical and neoclassical predecessors to consider the kinds of policies that state and the international community might actively adopt to accelerate a country's rate of development.[13] Thus the development economics that is widely known today is of recent origin, dating from during and after the Second World War as an offshoot of the economics paradigm.[14] It was a new subject in the 1940s, although it did not start with a clean slate.[15]This new offshoot arose as an economic counterpart to the political independence of the emerging countries of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean and its influence spread rapidly to Latin America and other low income areas.[16]The colonial administrators and nationalist leaders alike believed that'economic development'would offer the best hope of transforming colonial territories into prosperous industrial nations [17]However,it is obvious that while political independence can be legislated for, economic independence cannot [18]

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[12] ibid , p 5

[13] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p. 86

[14] The immediate post-Second World War period can be seen as having laid the foundation for the ongoing transformation in the geopolitical and economic spheres in the world de-colonization began, two blocks of states were created under the hegemony of Soviet Union and the US, although there were nominally neutral countries. The Marshall Plan was instrumental in economic rehabilitation in some of western economies, which were structurally sound, but devastated by the war Twin world bodies - the IBRD and IMF - were created to ensure the smooth running of international trade and financial flows, in general, and to look after the interests of free market economies, in particular The UN came into to being as a world body for resolving international conflicts and political affairs In the wind of these changes, the so-called group of 'underdeveloped' (Third World) countries emerged

[15] Pomfret, Richard, *Diverse paths of Economic Development,* Harvest Wheatsheaf, London, 1992, p 16

[16] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p 86

[17] Midgley, James *Social Development The Developmental Perspective in Social Welfare,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p 53

[18] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p 86

It is widely accepted that development economics relies for the most part on the fundamental principles of mainstream economics, but that the application of these principles has to be adapted to the particular conditions of developing countries.[19] Thus general economic principles are too general to give insights into applications for less developed economies.[20] Although development economists rely greatly on standard neoclassical principles that apply to rich and poor countries alike, the subject of development economics still has sufficient distinctive characteristics to make it a special sub-discipline in economics.[21] The body of the thought of this sub-discipline that has evolved since Second World War has, for good or ill, shaped policies for, and beliefs about, economic development in the Third World.[22] The new branch has examined the causes of low living standards and related problems in Third World Countries and made policy recommendations to bring them up to the standard of the developed countries. Over time, a considerable part of the literature of development economics seems to have been re-assimilated into mainstream economics, while the rest has expanded as branches of separate schools of economic thought.

1.1.2 Economic Development: *gleaning a meaning*

Growth economics is guided more by logical curiosity than by a taste for relevance.[23] The term 'development' itself is a value-laden one[24] and it could be regarded as the surrogate religion of the second half of the twentieth century.[25] The literature of economic development is not deficient in definitions about what development really means. It is defined as a rapid and sustained rise in real output per head and attendant shifts in the technological, economic and demographic characteristics of a society.[26]

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[19] ibid , p 67

[20] Bliss, Christopher *Handbook of Elopement Economics,* 1989, p 1188, quoted in Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p 90

[21] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p 90

[22] Lal, Deepak 'The Misconceptions of "Development Economics"' in Stuart Carbridge (ed) *Development Studies A Reader,* Edward Arnold, London, 1995, p 56

[23] Sen, A K *Growth Economics,* London, Penguin Books, 1970, p 36, quoted in Sundrum, R M *Economic Growth in Theory and Practice,* p 7

[24] Pomfret, Richard, *Diverse paths of Economic Development,* p 2

[25] Carmen, Raff *Autonomous Development, Humanizing the Landscape An Excursion into Radical Thinking and Practice,* Zed Books, London, 1996, p 11

[26] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', in David L Sills (ed)

'Material progress' was the phrase almost invariably used by mainstream economists from Adam Smith to the Second World War when they referred to what we would now call economic development.[27] All through the inter-war years, the phrase 'economic development', when it was used at all out side Marxist literature, continued to denote the development or exploitation of natural resources.[28] The two terms 'development' and 'progress' are seamlessly stitched together.[29] In the immediate postwar years the phrase 'economic development' became virtually synonymous with growth in per capita income in less developed countries.[30] It has now become widely current in the literature as 'economic growth' and has only been somewhat refined and qualified technically in comparison with the previous term 'material progress'. What many development economists tried to do in the 1960s and 1970s was to get away from this identification of 'economic development' with 'economic growth.'[31] In their commonly used meanings both economic growth and economic development are visibly complementary, each with the potential to contribute to the success of the other, but this does not deny their competitive nature: they are complementary each to other in the long run, but competitive in the short run.[32]

Dalton links development to applied economics and says that the purpose of measurement and analysis is to derive policy prescriptions to accelerate the structural transformation that generates income growth.[33] Adelma perceives that economic development is a 'process by which an economy is transformed from one whose rate of growth of per capita income is small or negative to one in which a significant self-sustained rate of increase of per

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International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, vol. 4, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, p. 395.

27 Arndt, H. W. ,'Economic Development: A Semantic History', p. 457; makes reference to Adam Smith. *The wealth of Nations*, E. Kannan (ed.), 2 vols. London, 1961.

28 ibid., p. 463.

29 Cowen, M. P. and Shenton, R. W. *Doctrines of Development,* Routledge, London, 1996, p. 6.

30 Arndt, H. W. 'Economic Development: A Semantic History', p. 465; makes reference to P.N. Rosenstein-Roden 'The International Development of Economically Backward Areas,' *International Affairs*. 20, April 1944.

31 ibid., p. 466.

32 Hope, Kempe Ronald. *Development in the Third World*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 1996, p. 4.

33 Dalton, George. *Economic Systems & Society*, Penguin Education, Harmondsworth. 1974, p. 198.

capita income is a permanent long-term feature.[34] For Mittelman, development entails, but is not synonymous with economic growth; it is the increasing capacity to make rational use of natural and human resources for social ends.[35] Pinches holds that economic development is 'the growing capability of people themselves to determine their future society.'[36] Sen links the wellbeing of an individual with the 'functioning' of a person, and defines development as an increase in the achievement of functioning by individuals, which depends not only on income and the public provision of goods, but also on the characteristics of goods to achieve a particular functioning of individuals.[37] Carmen defines development as an enterprise in which both oppressor and oppressed strive for humanization.[38]

There are occasions on which economic development is referred to as modernization, westernization or industrialization.[39] In other words, economic growth is interpreted as part of a larger process of 'modernization', which is seen as a wide range of changes in individual, social and political behavior and organization in a society.[40] Socio-economic development is difficult and complex process, which requires a profound transformation of the economic base of production, as well as of institutions and the people who are the producers.[41] Owing to the variety of policy objectives, the emphasis on various dimensions of economic development will vary at different times and in different countries.[42] Economic development, whatever definition is employed, appears as both

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34 Adelman, Irma. *Theories of Economic Growth and Development*, p 1

35 Mittelman, James H *Out from Underdevelopment Prospects for the Third World*, Macmillan, London, 1988, p 22

36 Pinches, Christine Rider, 'Economic Development The Need for an Alternative Approach', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* vol 19, no 1, vol 26, no 1, 1977, p 139

37 Sen, A K 'The Concept of Development', in Chenery, H B and Srinivasan, T N (eds) *Hand Book of Development Economics*, 1, North Holland, Amsterdam, 1988 and Sen, A K 'Development Which Way Now', *Economic Journal*, 93, Dec. 1983, pp 745-762, cited in Dutt, Amitava Krishna 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', p 24

38 Carmen, Raff *Autonomous Development, Humanizing the Landscape An Excursion into Radical Thinking and Practice*, p 3

39 Arndt, H W 'Economic Development A Semantic History' p 495

40 Herbert S Levine 'Economic Growth' in C D Kering (ed), *Marxism, Communism and Western Society A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, vol III, Herder and Herder, New York, 1972, p 20

41 Griling, R K 'Technology and Dependent development in Jamaica A Case Study', *Social and Economic Studies*, 1977, Vol 2, 1977, p 169

42 Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, p 8

means and goal, the goal is most often unwittingly assumed to be present at the onset of the process of development itself.[43]

Like most of the important concepts in the social sciences, the concept of 'development' has continued to expand in scope in the four decades it has been in circulation.[44] The slogan of development economics in 1970 was redistribution, instead of the popular opinion in the 1950s and 1960s of overall GNP growth and reliance on the 'trickle down' mechanism for the diffusion of prosperity among the masses.[45] Income distribution, level of poverty and social indicators based on the trickle-down mechanism have not improved in many developing countries because of slow economic growth, although the cases of China and Sri Lanka show that performance in theses areas is not necessarily correlated with per capita income.[46] '... the conventional IBRD or UN ranking of countries by per capita income are rather misleading. ... the market baskets of the United States and Sri Lanka are so different as to raise serious questions about welfare comparisons.'[47] The ultimate goal of economic development is the improvement of the quality of life; increasing per capita income is merely a poor quantitative proxy for this process.[48] Therefore, instead of simply worshipping at the altar of GNP, development economists began to examine more closely the quality of development.[49] Accordingly, the meanings of the term 'development' gradually changed in the 1970s from its almost exclusive association with the rate of aggregate economic growth to a much broader interpretation.[50] Because of these remarkable changes in the discipline, Third World Countries are now ranked not only by their levels of per capita income, but also by a confusing array of social

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43 Cowen, M P And Shenton, R W. *Doctrines of Development,* p 4

44 Nandy, Ashis. 'The Idea of Development The Experience of Modern Psychology as A Cautionary Tale and as an Allegory,' in John S Augustine (ed), *Strategies for Third World Development,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p 34

45 Todaro, Michael P 'Current Issues in Economic Development,' p 443

46 Dut, Amitava Krishna and Kim, Kwan S 'Market Miracle and State Stagnation? The Development Experience of South Korea and India Compared' in Amitawa Krishna Dutt, , Kwan S Kim, and Ajith Sing, (eds), *The State, Market and Development* Edward Elgar, Hants, 1994, p 194

47 Reynolds, Lloyd 'The Spread of Economic Growth to the Third World 1850-1980', *Journal of Economic Literature,* Vol XXI, September, 1983, p 956

48 Bhadurai, Amit 'Orthodox Development Theories and their Application to Less Developed Countries', in Gianni Vaggi (ed) *From the Debt Crisis to Perspectives of North-South Relations,* St Martin's Press, New York, 1993, p 7.

49 Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p 9

50 Todaro, Michael P 'Current Issues in Economic Development,' pp 441-442

indicators designed to measure changes in the 'quality of life', including health, education, life expectancy and various other components of 'basic human needs.'[51] Thus, economic development is now interpreted as the upward movement of the entire social system.[52] It is viewed as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, the reduction of inequality and the ultimate eradication of absolute poverty.[53] Today, efforts are still being made to enlarge the scope of the term 'development' and to include within it larger chunks of social reality.[54] Economic development is now tending to become something more than economic growth and something more than the removal of economic and non-economic impediments to economic growth.[55]

1.1.3 Development Economics: *is sub-discipline in crisis?*

'Development economics' has recently been passing through a turbulent period: not only has its application to economic policies in the Third World has been replaced by the neoclassical policy prescription of the market mechanism, but the intellectual progress of the discipline has been largely retarded. Some people would say therefore that development economics had its heyday in the 1960s and early 1970s and that it has been on the wane since the mid-1970s.[56] The old liveliness is no longer there, new ideas are increasingly hard to come by and the field is not adequately reproducing itself.[57] Yet all this is rather misleading and the important fact is that both the quantity and quality of research into less developed

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[51] ibid., p. 442.

[52] Myrdal, Gunnar. *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations,* vol. iii, Pantheon, New York, 1968, p. 1868.

[53] Todaro, Michael P. 'Current Issues in Economic Development,' p. 444.

[54] Nandy, Ashis. 'The Idea of Development: The Experience of Modern Psychology as A Cautionary Tale and as an Allegory,' in John S Augustine (ed.), *Strategies for Third World Development,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. 34.

[55] Nandy, Ashis. 'The Idea of Development: The Experience of Modern Psychology as A Cautionary Tale and as an Allegory,' p. 34.

[56] Knight, J. B. 'The Evolution of Development Economics' in V. N. Balasubramanyam and Sanjaya Lall (eds.), *Current Issues in Development Economics,* Macmillan Education Ltd., London, 1991, p. 10.

[57] Hirschman, A. O. 'The Rise and Decline of Development Economics', in A. O. Hirschman *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond,* Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 1; quoted in Dutt, Amitava Krishna. 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', p. 2.

economies have continued to increase.[58] There have been periods of rise and fall in the popularity of the subject and perhaps a decline in enthusiasm, but there is no evidence that the subject is undergoing a decline.[59] However, the days when we worried about the status of development economics as a sub-discipline of economics are long gone.[60] It is now often argued that development economists are simply mainstream economists who apply the tools of their trade to the analysis of the problems of developing countries.[61] Development economics, for its internal strength, is gripped by a kind of schizophrenia; while document economics is accepted generally, it is not always given a warm reception in either academic or policy-making circles.[62] Much more disconcerting to development economists is the view that the sub-discipline has not succeeded in slaying the dragon of backwardness, that it is dead as a discipline, and that its demise should be welcomed, as it may have done more harm than good for the interests of developing countries.[63]

'From the point of view of a modern economist,' Krugman says, 'the most striking feature of the works of high development theory is their adherence to a discursive, nonmathematical style. Economics has, of course,become vastly more mathematical over time. Nonetheless, development economics was archaic in style even for its own time.'[64] Sundrum has a different opinion of the mathematical foundation of development economics. 'Prevailing studies of economic growth' he states 'have greatly simplified that process in order to provide theoretical explanations. This is especially true of theories couched in sophisticated mathematical terms. But economic growth as it occurs in practice is a very complex process and therefore requires a complex analysis.'[65] Other authors complain about the lack of interdisciplinary approaches within the sub-discipline.

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[58] Knight, J B 'The Evolution of Development Economics' p 10

[59] Dutt, Amitava Krishna 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', p.26

[60] Balasubramanyam, V N and Lall, Sanjaya 'Introduction and Overview' in V. N Balasubramanyam and Sanjaya Lall (eds), *Current Issues in Development Economics*, Macmillan Education Ltd , London, 1991, p 2

[61] Balasubramanyam, V N and Lall, Sanjaya 'Introduction and Overview' p 2

[62] Naqvi, Syed Nawab Haider *Development Economics A New Paradigm*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1993, pp 29-30

[63] Balasubramanyam, V N and Lall, Sanjaya 'Introduction and Overview' p 2

[64] Krugman, Paul 'The Fall and Rise of Development Economics', in Lloyd Rodwin and Donald A Schon (eds), *Rethinking the Development Experience· Essays Provoked by the Work of Albert O Hirschman*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D C , 1994, p 45

[65] Sundrum, R M *Economic Growth in Theory and Practice*, p 7

> Over the years, terms such as 'interdisciplinary approach' have lost their intellectual respectability and scholars have been advised not to stray away from the 'scientific' and 'rigorous' approaches developed by their own area of specialization Only stalwarts like Karl Marx, Max Weber, Fernand Braudel, Gunnar Myrdal, Bert Hoselitz, Albert Hirchman, Barrington Moore Jr and so on, have been connived at, and even condemned, for their excursions and trespasses into other areas The rest are kept in line by means of an implied threat of the intellectual wilderness to which they could be consigned if they failed to apply disciplinary approaches and specialization, and to the established line [66]

Shultz denies not only the existence of, but also the very need for a 'separate' development economics [67] Frank says the time has come retrace the origins and development of the world economy

> The recent demise of the 'socialist system', its 'incorporation' into the 'capitalist system' and the increasing wealth of many Asian countries provide a new perspective on the origins and development of a world economic system that spanned the globe It is an appropriate moment to critically re-examine the work of Fernard Braudel and Immanual Wallerstein, both of whom advanced the view that the world economy emerged in western Europe by at least 1450, then spread out ward from Europe to encompass the rest of the world '[68]

'Economics' for Hicks 'is a leading example of uncertain knowledge, it is knowledge, yet it is evidently uncertain'[69] The world economic setup is quite different from that described by Frank above The wealth of some of

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[66] Somjee, A H *Development Theory Critiques and Explanations,* Macmillan, London, 1991,p 1

[67] Naqvi, Syed Nawab Haider *Development Economics A New Paradigm,* p 30, makes reference to Shultz, Theodore W *Transforming Traditional Agriculture,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964

[68] Frank, Andre Gundar 'The World Economic System in Asia Before European Hegemony', *Historian,* 56 (2), 1994, p 259, Pioneering works of Fernand Braudel on the origin of the world economy were instrumental in reshaping the intellectual view of the influence of the west on the rest of the world Wallerstein is one author who has adapted his work to analyze the current world system Braudel himself makes the following comments on Wallerstein 'Immanuel Wallerstein, an anthropologist who suddenly decided to write history and has done it brilliantly In 1974 he published his book, *The Modern World System* the book depends to a good deal on my work, but it has also taught me a great deal' see Braudel, Fernand 'The Expansion of Europe and the "Longue Durée", in H L Wesseling (ed) *Expansion and Reaction,* Leiden University Press, 1978, p 21

[69] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1979, p 2

the Asian countries turned into thin air during the economic crisis in some of them, the major economies exposed to those countries were either experienced a slowing down of their economic growth or the economic recession was being prolonged. The world economy is closely interrelated, if something happens in one place, it will spread everywhere. The cherished dream of driving the centrally planned Russian economy into the market mechanism has become a nightmare, while some of the former socialist bloc countries are doing well on a market footing. Economic history is full of bewilderment, puzzles and enigmas.

> The characteristic economic problems are problems of change, of growth and retrogression, and fluctuation. The extent to which these can be reduced into scientific terms is rather limited; for at every stage in an economic process new things are happening, things which have not happened before- at the most they are rather like what has happened before.'[70]

The periodical crises are therefore not confined to the economics paradigm, but also affect its sub-discipline, development economics. However, it will bounce back even from rock bottom when the time is ripe. For Dutt, development economics has not progressed in a linear manner, but on the contrary; early ideas on development were submerged after the marginalist revolution and the emphasis was transferred to resource allocation at a point in time, and an interest in development was confined mainly to the followers of Marx, Schumpeter and some institutionalist writers, to scholars interested in colonial administration, and to some nationalist writers.[71] It re-emerged with renewed energy in and around the Second World War after decades of dormancy, continued with a separate identity and passed into the doldrums in the 1980s. The Nobel Prize for economics for the year 1998 was given to a development economist and this could be regarded as a revitalizing of the sub-discipline once again [72]

1.1.4 Underdeveloped Countries: *baptism of the poor*

The sub-discipline of 'development economics' is the application of economics to the study of underdeveloped countries.[73] However, the

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[70] ibid., p. xi

[71] Dutt, Amitava Krishna. 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics',pp. 3-4.

[72] *The Hindu (Internet edition),* 15th October, 1998.

[73] Elkan, Walter. *An Introduction to Development Economics*, Prentice Hall Harvest Wheatsheaf, London, p. 1

division of the world into economically 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' segments is a recent phenomenon This division is more or less arbitrary and can be achieved only at the cost of great complexity or gross oversimplification.[74] The social sciences in general paid little attention to the societies which now form the Third World until the after the Second World War.[75] Wilfred Benson, former member of the ILO secretariat, was probably the first to speak in 1942 of 'underdeveloped areas' in the post war sense.[76] In 1944 Rosenstein-Rodan expounded his ideas for 'The International Development of Economically Backward Areas.'[77] By the 1950s, the term 'backward' with its pejorative connotation, had been generally discarded in favor first of the term underdeveloped and then less developed in the 1960s; at the same time, the expression Third World came into prominence.[78] Another conceptualization came into being in the middle of the 1960s and this gave birth to the term 'peripheral countries.'[79] In the 1970s a number of new terms came into use. One of these was the developing nations and a distinction was also made between the oil exporting and the non-oil exporting countries. At the present time, the terms less developed nations, developing countries and Third World countries are used interchangeably [80] In addition to these, phrases such as 'countries with the problems of colonial administration', 'southern countries' and 'arrested economies' can also be found in the economic development literature. In our analysis, we are not concerned about which term to use to explain economic backwardness and we use interchangeably most of the terms currently employed in the literature. Our concern is not to examine the etymological qualifications of the terminology, but the possible real causes behind economic backwardness.

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74 Adelman, Irma *Theories of Economic Growth and Development*, p 1

75 Roxborough, Ian *Theories of Underdevelopment* The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1979,p 13

76 Arndt, H W ,'Economic Development A Semantic History' p. 465, makes reference to W Benson, ' The Economic Advancement of Underdeveloped Areas' In *The Economic Basis of Peace*, National Peace Council London, 1942 p 10

77 ibid, p 465, makes reference to P N Rosenteins-Roden 'The International Development of Economically Backward Areas,' *International Affairs* 20, April 1944

78 Hope, Kempe Ronald *Development in the Third World*, pp 4-5

79 ibid, p 7

80 ibid, pp 4-5

1.2 Methodological Note: *a paddle to the canoe*

1.2.1 Development, Economics, History and Theory: *four in one*

The study of modern economics in general is supposed to be about examining what people actually want as against what they ought to want. The former is referred to as positive economic analysis and the latter as normative economic analysis. Cultural, religious, ethical, moral and aesthetic values have no place within the positivist approach. It is also considered to be an empirical scientific method of analysis, free from value judgements and based on the quantitative analysis of data. The literature of economic methodology is preoccupied with the question of theory confirmation or rejection or empirical theory appraisal, although other problems are also receiving growing attraction.[81] If economics is about the allocation of scarce resources among unlimited competitive wants in a dynamic society, theories are not merely for the sake of satisfying idle curiosity, but for bringing the highest possible wellbeing to human society in the present as well as in future generations.

Hicks maintains that the economist is concerned not only with the future, but also with the past. He has to begin from the past. Economics as a distinctive discipline is not only on the edge of science, but also on the edge of history; facing both ways. It is in the key position.[82] The subject matter of economics is essentially a unique historical process and nobody can hope to understand the economic phenomena of any epoch, including the present, who does not possess an adequate historical sense or what may be described as historical experience.[83] Similarly, a study of the history of opinion is necessary preliminary to the emancipation of the mind.[84] Most of the fundamental errors committed in economic analysis are due to lack of historical experience, more often than to any other shortcoming of the economist's equipment [85]

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[81] Hausman, Daniel M 'Economic Methodology in a Nutshell', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol 3, no. 2, 1989, pp. 115, 124

[82] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics*, p 4

[83] Schumpeter, Joseph A. *History of Economic Analysis*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1972, p 12

[84] Keynes, J M. *The End of the Laissez Faire*, Hogarth Press, London, 1926, p. 116; quotes in Knight, J B. 'The Evolution of Development Economics' in V. N. Balasubramanyam and Sanjaya Lall (ed), *Current Issues in Development Economics*, Macmillan Education Ltd , London, 1991, p

[85] Schumpeter, Joseph A *History of Economic Analysis*, pp 12-13

Closely related to economic history is the field of economic development, which covers both the theory of growth and the more practical application of economics to the problems of less developed areas.[86] Development theories simply postulate the existence of different phases or stages of a development process and hypothesize about the forces that cause a change in the phase or stage of development.[87] They also attempt to explain current conditions in terms of sequences of interconnected chains of historical events.[88]

Development economics, more than some other branches of the subject, needs a historical perspective.[89] The center of gravity in development economics is the problem of 'underdevelopment'. The pursuit of history is imperative for understanding the causes of current underdevelopment.[90] Economic history applies economic analysis to problems that are outside the recent past, although such problems often have implications for the present and future.[91] There is, however, no logical difference between the study of recent history and the study of the history of the earliest periods and the same principle must apply to each [92]

> ' the mere fact that the economist is so largely concerned with current affairs of the present, gives him a particular responsibility with respect to time What the past is to the historian, the present is to the economist So, if one says that the economist is concerned with the present, that is just another way of saying that he is concerned with the past and with the future Recent past and near future, but near future is still future and recent past is already past Last year's statistics are historical statistics '[93]

Historical theories, when and where available, explain current events or conditions in terms of a causal chain of historical events or conditions and explain or predict how these events or conditions evolve [94] Historians have

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[86] Rees, Albert 'Economics', in David L Sills (ed) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences,* vol 4, p 483

[87] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 2

[88] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 42

[89] Elkan, Walter *An Introduction to Development Economics*, p 1

[90] Morris, Cynthia Taff and Adelman, Irma. *Comparative Patterns of Economic Development, 1850-1914*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1988, p 4

[91] Rees, Albert 'Economics', in David L Sills (ed) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences,* vol 4,p 482

[92] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics*, p 4

[93] ibid , p 3

[94] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 2

discussed the origins of wars and revolutions, the impact of economic changes upon social relations, yet contemporary analytical philosophy has not provided them with an adequate account of their causal reasoning.[95] In historical analysis '... the 'facts' which would interest the theorist are not what happened but why it happened; and while history may record what happened, it is seldom able to record why it happened.'[96] Historians' opinions of why it happened, if they proceed that far, are usually no more than a reflection of their personal theories of social causation.[97] The abundance of the particulars is not essentially sufficient to paint a clear picture of historical progression. Even when there are plenty of historical records, no one can always be certain exactly what happened.[98] Above all, historical information may not purely consist of what an economist is interested in; instead it is mixed up with many other social phenomena.

> ' historical report cannot be purely economic but must inevitably reflect also 'institutional' facts that are not purely economic therefore it affords the best method for understanding how economic and non-economic facts *are* related to one another and how the various social science *should* be related to one another '[99]

The problem in historical studies is to decide which causes are more important than others. If events are measurable, this would sometimes be possible using statistical techniques; if events are non-measurable, one is in the realm of personal judgements.[100] Most economic historians examine economic events in terms of the prevailing economic theories at the time of writing.[101] Specific growth theories formulated by economist theorists rigorously show the impact of key parameters on current production and growth.[102] Thus economic historians and economic theorists can, if they wish, make an interesting and socially valuable journey together, a journey into the sadly neglected area of economic change [103] There is, however, a

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95 Ringer, Fritz K 'Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning', p 154

96 Lewis, W Arthur *Theory of Economic Growth*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1972, p 15

97 Lewis, W Arthur *Theory of Economic Growth*, p 15

98 ibid , p 15

99 Schumpeter, Joseph A *History of Economic Analysis*, pp 12-13

100 Lewis, W Arthur *Theory of Economic Growth*, , p 16

101 ibid , p 15

102 Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 42

103 Schumpeter, Joseph A 'The Creative Response in Economic History', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol VII, No 2, Nov 1947, p 149

connection between historical and formal growth theories: formal theories may be in part representations of historical theories and historical theories in turn may be strongly influenced by formal theories.[104]

Adam Smith, the founder of classical political economy and eventually of modern economics, did not forget to analyze the historical advance of economic progress when he was composing his seminal work *The Wealth of Nations*. He described the sequence of economic progress as a progression through hunting, pastoralism, agriculture, commerce and manufacturing.[105] The classical political economists, however, were criticized by both the historical school, particularly in Germany, and the socialists; the former directed their attacks against the perpetuation of classical theory, while the latter criticized and rejected capitalist economic theory insofar as it was characterized by a free market economy.[106]

The birth of the German historical school is considered as a reaction to the English enlightenment and classical economics.[107] They criticized the classical school's deductive method as being too abstract and put the emphasis on the inductive method.[108] Members of the German historical school viewed history as evolutionary in the sense that a more advanced economic stage evolved from a more primitive stage.[109] Stage theorists conceived a nation as a person with predictable stages of development from birth to maturity.[110] Marx related Hegel's thesis, antithesis and synthesis to the Marxian stages of feudalism, capitalism and socialism.[111] His dialectical materialism was highly influenced by Hegelian philosophy. For Grabowsky, an exception to the German historical school view was that of Wilhelm Roscher, who equated economic order with a biological organism which grows, matures and then decays. Stage theorists, on the other hand, have used various schemes for classifying economic history into a number of epochs. Friedrich List divided history into savages, pastoral, agricultural, manufacturing-agricultural and manufacturing-agricultural-commercial

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104 Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P. *Development Economics*, pp. 1-2.

105 Meier, Gerald M. *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, p. 69.

106 Kruse, Alfred. 'Economics-Political Economy', in C. D. Kering (ed.), *Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, vol. III, pp. 34-35.

107 Schinzinger, F. 'German Historical School', *Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, vol. 2, Macmillan, London, 1987, p. 516.

108 ibid., p. 516.

109 Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P. *Development Economics*, p. 14.

110 McCloskey, Donald N. *If You're So Smart: The Narrative of Economic Expertise*, 1990, p. 76.

111 Meier, Gerald M. *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, 1995, p. 69.

stages [112] In addition to his theory of the stages of economic growth, List's other major contributions were the doctrine of 'national economics' and 'productive powers.' And he was a foremost advocate of protecting infant industry from the competition of advanced manufacturing countries, as well as a critic of free trade and laissez faire.[113] Bruno Hilderbrand organized history into natural or barter, monetary and credit stages [114]

Karl Bücher classified economic development into household, town and national economies [115] Alexander Gerschenkron, the economic storyteller, radically revised the metaphor of social stages. His major scientific contribution was the 'theory of relative backwardness' and he favored his own metaphors such as *spurt* and *relative backwardness* in preference to *take-off* or *absolute prerequisites* [116] Rostow, the best known current stage theorist, has more in common with List than with Bucher [117] An important aspect of Rostow's study is its view, explicit or implicit, of the relationships between economic growth and overall societal development, and between capital and economic growth [118] It is possible to recognize broader similarities and fundamental differences between Rostow's analysis and Marx's sequences [119] Rostow's views of economic take-off and the concept of leading sectors were also fed and then reinforced by the work of Gerschenkron on Europe's growth experience during the 19th century [120]

For Grabowski, all stages theorists- List, Bücher and Rostow- emphasized the importance of non-economic factors in the development process. List argued that the promoting of manufacturing is the key, not because of economic characteristics, but because it is the key to the cultural and social environment that evolves as a result of the establishment of industry stimulating economic growth. Bücher argued that political factors

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[112] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 14.

[113] Henderson, W O *Friedrich List Economist and Visionary 1789-1846*, Frank Cass and Company Ltd , London, 1983, p 143

[114] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 14

[115] Ibid , p 14

[116] McCloskey, Donald N *If You're So Smart The Narrative of Economic Expertise*, , pp 70-71, 76

[117] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 16.

[118] Oman, Charles P and Wignaraja, Ganeshan *The Postwar Evolution of Development Thinking*, Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd in association with the OECD Development Center, 1991, p 10

[119] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, p 70

[120] Oman, Charles P and Wignaraja, Ganeshan *The Postwar Evolution of Development Thinking*, p 11

are the key in promoting economic growth In Rostow's model, the emergence of a new elite class and nation states are crucial [121]

> 'Historians point out that economic development is unique, so there can be no 'natural laws' in economics The economist can only try to show patterns of development common to different economies Instead of searching for generally applicable laws, the historical school therefore tried describe the particulars of each era, society and economy '[122]

The work of Friedrich List may be regarded as a link between classical political economic theory and the historical school.[123] He recognized the classical economic theories which, in his opinion, were applicable only to the highest stage of development, to the England of his time, but not to the developing German economy [124] From the ethical point of view, the German historians were in favor of the state playing an important role in economic affairs, and they were also concerned about the poor, the unemployed and the elderly [125]

As a distinct discipline, economics inherits quite a rich and sound theoretical background for its analytical purpose. Many of these theories are pursued for no better reason than their intellectual attraction, although the same would hold for many branches of pure mathematics.[126] Some people are specially attracted to certain theories, although not essentially because of their special qualifications over others 'Even after studying economics for over 40 years,' says Blaug 'I still ask myself frequently: why do I believe in some economic theories and not others.'[127] Every theory is not analysis, but analysis applied to the facts.[128] Mere facts or data are not sufficient, they have to be collected scientifically. The formulation and testing of a hypothesis will follow data collection. If the hypothesis passes the test, it will become a theory. If the theory survives

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[121] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, pp 17-18

[122] Schinzinger, F 'German Historical School', in John Eatwell et al (eds) *Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, vol 2, p 516

[123] Kruse, Alfred 'Economics-Political Economy', in C D Kering (ed), *Marxism, Communism and Western Society A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, vol III, p 35

[124] Ibid , p 35

[125] Schinzinger, F 'German Historical School', in John Eatwell et al (eds.) *Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, vol 2, pp 516 517

[126] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics*, 1979, p viii

[127] Blaug, Mark *Economic Theories, True or False?· Essays in the History and Methodology of Economics*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Brookfield, 1990, p 1

[128] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1979, p ix

the tests of other scientists, perhaps after years, it will become a law [129] Logical causation is the most important characteristic of a theory 'When theory is applied, it is being used as a means of explanation We ask not merely what happened, but why it happened That is causation, exhibiting the story, so far as we can, as logical process '[130] Preconceived perceptions or ideological sentiments conceal the reality 'Ideology is often seen as merely a distortion of science, like a cloud passing before the eyes of the observer which obscures his vision '[131]

Lewis says that the handling of questions of social evolution is much more difficult than the handling of questions of consistency, since the deductive method is much less help in answering them To understand how or why something happens, we must look at the facts, we must apply the inductive method to historical data [132] 'As a rule, no factor acts in a uniquely determined way and, whenever it does not, the necessity arises of going into the details of its modus operandi, into the mechanisms through which it acts '[133] In analyzing economic life in its secular process of change it is much more difficult to visualize the really important factors and features of this process than to formulate their modi operandi once we have got hold of them [134]

Every economist goes through a phase where he is dissatisfied with the deductive basis of economic theory and feels sure that a much better insight into economic process can be gained by studying the facts of economic history [135] 'One of the standard ways of writing economic history which is much practiced by political historians in their economic chapters, is to survey the state of the economy under consideration, as it was in various historical periods, comparing one state with another This is comparatively static It is when the economic historian tries to throw his work into the form of narrative that it becomes, in our sense, dynamic And any examination of this work of economic historians will show what a difficult threshold has to be crossed at that point '[136] A new crop of economic

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[129] Boland, Lawrance A 'Methodology', in John Eatwell et al (eds) *Palgrave Dictionary of Economics,* vol 2, pp 455-458

[130] Hicks, John *Causality in Economics*, pp ix-x, Like Mill, Jevons, Edgeworth and Keynes, Hicks employed the methodology of induction

[131] Bleany, M F *Underconsumption Theories A History and Critical Analysis*, Lawrance and Wishart, London, 1976, p 17

[132] Lewis, W Arthur *Theory of Economic Growth* , p 15

[133] Schumpeter, Joseph A The Creative Response in Economic History, p 149

[134] Schumpeter, Joseph A *History of Economic Analysis*, p 570

[135] Lewis, W Arthur *Theory of Economic Growth,* p 15

[136] Hicks, John *Methods of Dynamic Economics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, p 7

theories is followed by a new crop of historical articles rewriting history in terms of the new theory.[137]

Whether development is conditioned only by economic factors has long been a debatable point and the controversy will drag on until mainstream economics has incorporated at least certain important social aspects into its analytical framework. Adam Smith's major contribution was to bring in the economic and non-economic factors which together facilitated economic progress.[138] To most economists, economic growth was subject to its own laws, irrespective of the human, social, cultural or historical contexts within which economic growth, or the absence of it, occurred.[139] Economists were therefore reluctant to go beyond the narrowly defined perimeters of their discipline, partly because of their anxiety not to lose the 'rigorous' and 'scientific' character of the discipline.[140] Meanwhile some authors, mainly non-economists, have defined development as modernization along western lines, while others have denounced western civilization and interpreted development as the flowering of traditional societies.[141] The attainment of a number of ideals of modernization, such as a rise in productivity, social and economic equality, modern knowledge, improved institutions and attitudes and a rationally coordinated system of policy measures that can be removed a host of undesirable conditions in the social system that have perpetuated a state of underdevelopment.[142] Making reference to Asian societies, Somjees says; 'Political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists are unanimous in their opinion that there is a thick overlay of culture on the political societies of Asian countries. And while the economists formally acknowledge such a position, the nature of their theoretical knowledge, which is almost entirely based in the development experiences of a few Western societies, prevents them from coming to terms with this vital fact.'[143] These ideas are not easily incorporated into mainstream economic thinking. 'Loosely described, high development theory is the view that development is a virtuous circle driven by external economies - that is, that modernization breeds modernization. Some countries, according to this view, remained unchanged because they have

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137 Lewis, W. Arthur. *Theory of Economic Growth,* , 1972, p. 15.

138 Somjee, A. H. *Development Theory: Critiques and Explanations,* p. 86.

139 ibid., pp. 5-6.

140 ibid., p. 4.

141 Dutt, Amitava Krishna. 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', p. 24.

142 Black, E. B. *The Dynamic of Modernization,* 1966, pp. 55-60; quoted in Meier, Gerald M. *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* p. 7.

143 Somjee, A. H. *Development Theory: Critiques and Explanations,* p. 59.

failed to get this virtuous circle going and thus remain stuck in a low-level trap.'[144]

In our analysis, although we concentrate on the economic aspects of development, we also give fair attention to non-economic factors. This is not an attempt at inter-disciplinary marriage or a first step towards matrimony. We are not prepared to take such a bold step in that direction at this stage. This exercise could rather be regarded as entering into good neighborly relations with other disciplines. Our research period covers a transitional phase from pre-capitalism to capitalism, so it is a period of social evolution, and more suited to induction than to deduction. In the final stage of the study, a two-way comparison is required: (i) the comparison of experiences in the same country at two points of time and, (ii) a comparison of inter-country experiences. The latter may also consist of inter-country and inter-period comparisons. In this sense, our analysis approaches a comparative static analysis.

Our work generally supports the view that colonialism is one of the major causes of current economic underdevelopment, although it is only one way of interpreting the known historical facts. What would have been the trajectory of economic development if there had been no colonial influences? This type of question would lead the researcher to unspecified open-ended alternatives. As a strategy to overcome this dilemma, we would naturally shift to inter-country comparisons from quite different perspectives. One option is to select countries without direct colonial influences and another would be to compare them with the colonized country's experiences. Neither of these cases may be sufficient to meet the challenge, since the specific characteristics of a selected country would not be fully compatible with those of others. Only highly generalized theoretical frameworks would facilitate this type of comparison. However, this would be the second best alternative to the open ended solution.

Changes in consumption pattern as a possible cause of economic underdevelopment is not a fully quantifiable phenomenon. Nor do we have sufficient numerical data for this purpose. Since the growth of mathematical economics, empirical analysis is mostly centered around quantitative methods which have a natural affinity to positivism rather to normative philosophy. There is a tradition of considering that the former is more rational and scientific than the latter. Our analysis is highly descriptive and inclines rather to normativism. However, this does not necessarily mean that we are drifting away from the scientific ambit and confining ourselves to the universe of value judgements. Most welfare

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[144] Krugman, Paul. 'The Fall and Rise of Development Economics', p. 41.

economics theories are strongly based on value judgements and are also highly descriptive. Schumpeter's contributions to economic literature, although they are highly descriptive, remain on an equal footing with standard mathematical approaches.

> The Physiocrats drew a diagram, Adam Smith used words, Ricardo used arithmetic, Marshall used geometry, and Walras used simultaneous equations all to show the same thing: that household and business firms in their domestic and foreign transactions of resources and products, each pursuing his material self-interest as buyer or seller in competitive markets, produced an optimum, an equilibrium, a maximum.'[145]

An in-depth discussion is not necessary to say the immense power of mathematical economics tools. However, it is not a good excuse for relegating descriptive economics to a lower position, since it also has the same power under a different circumstances.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study: *drawing contours*

As is well known, Ceylon, currently known as Sri Lanka, is an island situated in close proximity to India and is one of the underdeveloped countries with a centuries-old legacy of colonial rule. Most of the characteristics commonly attributed to economic underdevelopment can be found in this country. Although the per capita income of the country is very low compared to developed countries, some of the socio-economic indicators popularly and widely used nowadays to determine the level of economic development of a country are commendably high and some of them are on a par with developed countries.

Because of its strategic location, the country not only came under the influence of European expansion from the 16th century onwards, but it was also subject to other foreign interventions and invasions long before the arrival of Europeans, mainly from the Indian subcontinent. In the absence of any major differences between the socio-economic structure of Ceylon and of the Indian subcontinent, no drastic changes resulted from these early foreign influences. (Here we purposely overlook the introduction of Buddhism to the island and its great influence from the 3rd century BC). It was only after the European invasions that significant and far-reaching changes took place in the economic and social life of the country.

Ceylon came under the influence of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the

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[145]Dalton, George. *Economic Systems & Society*, p. 45.

British in that order from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first two European nations failed to extend their authority beyond twenty miles from the coast, partly because they were able to achieve their basic trade objectives without trying to extend their rule further, and partly because of the strong resistance from domestic rulers. Thus they were able to achieve their colonial objectives without introducing any drastic change in the prevalent economic pattern in the country. In contrast, the British, having successfully brought the entire island under their authority in the early nineteenth century, worked gradually towards changing the centuries-old political, social and economic structure.

The prime aim of the British during the first few decades of their rule was to keep the island as a strategic location in the empire. The attitude of the crown appears to have changed with the emergence of plantation agriculture in the 1840s. With British capital, Britain embarked upon an all-out effort to keep the island as a profit-making colony. Before the arrival of Europeans, subsistence production, barter transactions and limited international trade were the major characteristics. The Portuguese and the Dutch inherited this economy and made some changes on European lines, but they were unable to make any significant change to the prevailing economy of the country except in some coastal isolated pockets. After the British occupation and, particularly, after the introduction of plantation agriculture, the economy began to undergo far-reaching changes. The expansion of the money economy, the development of communications and international trade, the establishment of common law and the transformation of a closed pre capitalist society into an open modern one were some of these changes.

The broader objective of our study is to examine the possible historical roots and causes of the current underdevelopment of the country. So far, a number of studies have examined the economic history of the British period from different angles. Yet further research is needed, since no research has so far been able to shed sufficient light into the dark corners of history where the possible causes of economic underdevelopment may be resting like hibernating creatures.

The specific objective of the study is to examine the role of changes in consumption patterns as one of the possible major causes of underdevelopment in the country, paying special attention to the British colonial period, which covers one-and-half centuries, starting from the onset of nineteenth century. In one sense, the period of British administration in Ceylon could be considered as the period which transformed the traditional economy and society into a modern one. The colonial administration, in the process of this modernization, implemented

a variety of policies which were more or less common to the other colonies of the huge British empire. One of the outcomes of the colonial policies was to change the traditional consumption patterns of the country.

There are studies which regard consumption as an important instigator in the transformation of an economy (**see also Chapter 2 & 3**). In developed countries, the consumption pattern was mostly an autonomous factor in the modernization drive, while it was an externally introduced or alien to colonies. Many colonies, such as Ceylon, went through the same mill of changes in consumption pattern under the British or other colonizers in varying degrees. While accepting the complicated nature of the transformation process of an economy and the heterogeneous factors which may contribute to economic development or underdevelopment, the study treats the changes in consumption pattern as one of the central causes. It aims to achieve the following broad objectives.

To demonstrate the changes in consumption pattern during the British colonial administration in Ceylon, the influence of colonial policies in this direction and their impact on the economic underdevelopment of the island. Attention will also be paid to the comparable experiences of other selected countries when and where necessary.

Consumption patterns in Ceylon began to change visibly with the arrival of Portuguese at the dawn of the 16th century. The process continued under the Dutch rule after the Dutch took over the administration of the country from the Portuguese in the middle of the 17th century. These two colonizers failed to bring the entire country under their control, which was largely confined to the coastal areas, so that European influences were by and large confined to the coastal belt of the island.

1.2.3 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions: *development puzzle*

Why are some countries developed and others not? What are the factors that may contribute to economic underdevelopment and its continuation? What are the central and peripheral contributory factors to economic underdevelopment? What is the historical background to the current economic underdevelopment? Is it an economic underdevelopment or a kind of economic backwardness, economic underdevelopment, or is it a process through the path of development? These are some of the questions that have been repeatedly discussed in the development literature, particularly during the past five or six decades. Nevertheless, no consensus has emerged among scholars, policy makers, economic advisors,

politicians, or the donor countries and donor agencies about the multitude of problems of economic underdevelopment. As a consequence of this disagreement, a number of alternative policies have been evolved, discussed and debated. Some of the development oriented policies have been tested in underdeveloped countries in one way or the other since the Second World War. Nevertheless, economic underdevelopment is still markedly present in the world and it is one of the greatest challenges confronted by civilized man.

The historical roots of the economic underdevelopment of Ceylon have long been traced from different angles. It is still continuing, as in many other countries with more or less similar historical experiences. Our objective here, as we have pointed out, is to unearth the historical causes of the economic underdevelopment of the island from the consumption point of view, with special reference to the British colonial period. We may therefore formulate the problem statement in relation to our research objective as follows:

Did the changes in consumption patterns in the British colonial period contribute to economic underdevelopment in Ceylon?

The term economic 'underdevelopment' as it appears here has a specific connotation in accordance with the school(s) of thought in development literature, but it is nevertheless widely applied in the general development literature interchangeably with many other similar terms, such as economic backwardness, without any special qualification (**see also pp. 13-14**). We refer to the term here in the latter sense as being sufficient for our purpose. The concept of 'changes in consumption pattern' is interpreted in Chapter Three, where we present our alternative analytical framework on consumption patterns and economic (under)development.
Before doing so and to support the formulation of our alternative analytical framework we shall discuss relevant issues in some areas in the social science domain, with special reference to economics:

1 What is the particular field of development studies and what is meant by economic development of a country in a historical perspective?

2 Who is the 'consumer' and what is 'consumption' as discussed in mainstream economics? What is the role of consumption in an economy as read in mainstream economics?

3 How is the role of consumption examined in leading consumer theories and concepts?

4 What is the theoretical relationship between consumption and economic growth and/or (under)development, and between the changes in consumption pattern and economic growth and/or (under)development?

This exercise is carried out in support of the formulating of an alternative analytical framework and to make our arguments stronger.

The problem statement will be considered as the base line of our research work. The following research questions can be formulated for a detailed investigation of the area covered by the problem statement; they guide us through the analysis of our case study.

1 What was the consumption pattern prevalent in the pre-British Ceylon?

2 In what ways were the traditional consumption patterns subject to changes in British Ceylon?

3 What were the factors attributable to changes in consumption patterns in British Ceylon?

4 To what extent did changes in consumption pattern affect the allocation of resources, production and economic growth and/or (under)development in British Ceylon? Do the important changes which occurred conform with the philosophy advanced by international trade theories in mainstream economics?

Some of the information used in this work has already been published, while some of it is only in manuscript form. Archives, documentation centers, selected libraries, special official bodies formed to maintain colonial records and museums are the main sources of information. The sources on which we most heavily depended are referred in the acknowledgements. We are not directly concerned with folklore, inscriptions or ola leaves as sources of information. The first hand information about the contemporary Ceylonese and Dutch societies was taken into account only on very rare occasions (**see below: *Limitations of the study***). The research work was carried out in five main stages: i.e.

1 A theoretical survey of consumption and economic growth and/ or (under)development.

2 Formulation of an alternative theory for examining the changes in

consumption patterns and economic growth and/or (under)development.

3 A brief survey of the history of consumption and economic growth and/or (under)development in a few selected countries other than Ceylon.

4 An extensive survey of the changes in consumption patterns and economic growth and/or (under)development in British Ceylon.

5 The drawing of conclusions from the historical experiences of consumption and economic (under)development in British Ceylon. The drawing of conclusions from the theoretical survey of consumption.

1.2. 4 Limitations of the study: *walking on a tightrope*

The general period of investigation of the study runs from the first king to the first prime minister of Ceylon. However, the main concern is from 1840s to the 1940s - economically and socially the most important hundred years of British rule. We do not always confine ourselves strictly to this time frame, since socio-economic changes are slow and continuous and cannot be brought into a strict chronological order.

Any researcher has to carry out his research work subject to limitations of one sort or another. The most important of these is the absence of information for a specific research question. We are also not immune from this serious limitation. It has long been one of the common complaints shared by a number of researchers on the economic and social history of Ceylon. Jennings says that information in Ceylon is slight, even though it has increased since 1944 [146]

This is not, however, the common impression shared equally by every one, at least as far as general historical information about the island is concerned. When compared to the south Asian countries, the past of Sri Lanka is far more accessible, since it is recorded in the unique chronicles, the *Mahawamsa* and *Culawamsa*. These two works together trace the history of the island from the sixth century BC to the Portuguese conquest in the sixteenth century.[147] Although these chronicles, together with ancient inscriptions, provide conventional historical information, there are some

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[146] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The economy of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, London, 1951, p. 1.

[147] Smith, Donald E., 'Religion Politics and the Myth of Reconquest,' in Tissa Fernando and Robert N Kearney (eds.). *Modern Sri Lanka: A Society in Transition;* Foreign and Comparative studies· South Asian Series; no. 4, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, New York, 1979, p. 83.

statistics for the period prior to the twentieth century. Statistical records of the Dutch and early British periods do exist, but most of them have not been compiled into time series.[148]

Our interest is the British administration in the island's history. The British started to provide accurate statistical data with the publication of an annual Blue Book series from 1820; between 1820-1867 these were produced only in manuscript form and are now available from the Public Record Office in London and the National Archives in Colombo. The early issues of the series cover only few areas, are sometimes tallied incorrectly or not at all and contain sections of damaged or illegible handwriting [149] In addition, the agriculture statistics in the Blue Books are notoriously unreliable [150] 'In general, however, the availability and quality of data improved, especially after the Blue Books began to be printed in 1868. The Blue Books ceased publication in 1938.'[151]

Among other sources of statistical data, the Administrative Reports of governments and agencies are valuable sources, although they are second to the Blue Books for the span of the time covered and they had a tendency to change the reporting formats or even omit quantitative data altogether. In addition, a privately compiled volume of statistics, Ferguson's Ceylon Directory, began to be compiled in 1859-1860. An unusually effective and relatively complete set of data has been available since 1957 [152] The island took its first decennial census in 1871.

Our special interest, as mentioned earlier, is the changes in consumption pattern during the British period. The overwhelming majority of consumers during this period were small producers living in the so-called traditional sector, as they still do even today. Statistical information, whatever its quality, is related to the modern sector of the colonial economy. The subsistence or traditional sector does not provide such figures [153] Ivor Jennings maintains that there was an inherent difficulty in the statistics about the economy of Ceylon prior to the Second World War, when the economy had been heavily dependent on small producers [154]

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148 Peebles, Patrick *Sri Lanka A Handbook of Historical Statistics*, G H Hall and Co , Bostan, 1982, p 5

149 Peebles, Patrick. *Sri Lanka A Handbook of Historical Statistics*, p 5

150 Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, Lake House Investment Ltd , Colombo, 1985, p 27

151 Peebles, Patrick Sri Lanka A Handbook of Historical Statistics, p 5

152 ibid , p 5

153 Jayakoddy, A T. *Financing of Economic Development in Ceylon*, Thesis submitted for the M Sc examination of the University of London, March 1954, p 20.

154 Jennings, Sir Ivo *The economy of Ceylon*, p vii

What happened to the traditional sector during a century of estate development (1840-1939) is difficult to ascertain, as reliable production statistics are totally lacking.[155] 'Although the progress of the plantation economy has been recorded for more than a century, hardly any information is available on peasant agriculture from 1850 onwards. Even government publications made only casual references to this sector of the economy on which more than one half of the country's population depended.'[156] Colonial Administration reports, especially those on the provincial administration, although lacking statistical content, penetrated to the very core of Ceylonese society in British Ceylon; so we have naturally turned to these reports in our analysis. They were not, however, a perfect historical record.

> 'It was impossible for British civil servants who were as a rule ignorant of customs, languages and culture of the Ceylonese, to establish effective liaison with the mass of the people. Nor did these officials possess the necessary influence to do so. There was therefore in general administrative matters a very real dependence on the *mudaliyars*. The dependence was particularly accentuated on account of the disposition of the government to take cognizance of local customs in the administration of justice.'[157]

As a complementary source to the colonial official publications, we have referred to the literature accumulated in this research area. Most of these publications are not free from value judgements and some are extremely biased towards personal perceptions, so that they are ideologically either pro or anti-colonial in tone. Many of the critical works on this field date from the post-independence period. The accuracy of travelers' records we have occasionally referred to depends on the duration of the period of travel, the areas covered and the author's ability to grasp the local socio-economic setup and, above all, the travelers curiosity. Moreover, they are by no means free of value judgements.

The changes brought about under the British certainly went beyond the mere economic sphere. Even in the economic field, they extended through production, exchange and consumption in the broad sense and, looked at in detail, they covered many branches of the economy. The function of a

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155 Snodgrass, Donald R. *Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transition*, Richard D. Irwin Inc., Homewood, Illinois, 1966, p. 46.

156 Karunatilake, H. N. S. *Economic Development in Ceylon*. Praeger Publishers Inc., England and United States of America, 1971, p. 15.

157 Wickremeratne, L. A. Education and Social Change, 1832 to c. 1900, *University of Ceylon. History of Ceylon*, Volume Three, The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p. 166.

society is not entirely determined by economic factors. This is very obvious in societies where individual freedom and mobility are utterly restricted by authoritarian rulers and provincial officials, as well as by cultural and social factors. In order to draw clear conclusions, one must examine a cross-section of all aspects of social life. Such a detailed and comprehensive study would cover all aspects, including social, political, economic, juridical, cultural, and psychological influences. However, the limited time available for this task does not allow us to accept the challenge of such a complicated and lengthy study. This study concentrates on consumption which is considered as the inactive part of the mainstream economic analysis.

We are here dealing mainly with the consumption of goods and services by households - satisfying their final needs at the micro level. A macro-level analysis considers the total household consumption of a society. In the harsh old (pre-industrial) world, most of the subsistence economies consisted of fragmented economic units such as village, manor, fief or Han and macro analysis hardly went beyond the boundaries of these small communities.[158] In many early subsistence economies, it was difficult to draw lines between production, distribution and consumption - all the processes either overlapped each other or were confined to the small fragmented units. Consequently, the division of labor, specialization and exchange (mainly barter) had not been developed to any extent in that period, so that it was difficult to isolate consumption from other aspects of the economy. The same would apply to production to a certain extent, but the researcher in this field would have the disadvantage that economic information is always has a production bias. During the period of our study, there were some visible signs of disintegration of the old system. Much has been said and written on this disintegration, but not unfortunately from the perspective of consumption.

The island has had two distinctive names in modern history, Ceylon and Sri Lanka, the former was in circulation among people speaking foreign languages and in the literature written in foreign languages prior to the new constitution which came into force in 1972. The constitutional reforms made the country a fully independent state, although it remains a member of the British Commonwealth. In our study; both Ceylon and Sri Lanka are used interchangeably, giving much emphasis to the latter, as it was the colonial name. Literary work on the colonial administration of the island covers a vast spectrum of social sciences - history, sociology, economic

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158 In order to avoid generalizing from the particular, we do not give undue preference to isolated commercialized pockets in some countries.

history, Sinhalese literature and anthropology. As might be expected, we pay much attention in our study to the writings of economic historians or at least of authors writing from that perspective.

Although the major concern of the study is the changes in consumption pattern during the British period, we give a brief overview of the pre-British period. This extends through indigenous rule in the ancient and medieval periods to the initial periods of European rule – those of the Portuguese and Dutch. The pre-British part of the study relies overwhelmingly on literary works covering a considerable area of different disciplines of the social sciences. The filtering out of information on consumption in the economic sense from this vastly scattered area is a cumbersome and time-consuming exercise. Above all, modern consumption theories are mostly based on market economies and strongly oriented towards the experiences of developed countries. Much of the economic history research work on the island has concentrated on the European periods and, more particularly, on the British and post-independence periods. The pre-European period belongs to the fields of history, travel, religion and classical literature and inscriptions, so that the gleaning of economic information about the pre-European period is naturally a very time-consuming and laborious exercise. In order to confine ourselves to a manageable study of the pre-European period, we have limited ourselves to those works from which information can be readily abstracted to meet the objective of our study. Thus we have deliberately overlooked the thinly scattered information in the rest of the literature.

Although Ceylon is a comparatively small country, it is a relatively large island. The country is multiethnic and multi-religious, although the majority of the people are Sinhalese Buddhists. The coastal parts of the country were subject to direct European influences well before the hinterland was. The danger of generalization about the entire country and the total population should be taken into account as a serious limitation. The country also has a varied ecological, climatic and social structure. 'The island's economic history cannot be charted without taking its regional differentiation into account. ... In depicting changes and analyzing the effects of governmental policies, therefore, one must be cautious in extending historical evidence drawn from one of these ecological zones across the board as an all-island generalization.'[159] Thus, the changes of

[159]Roberts, Michael. Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century, *University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon*, vol., iii, The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p. 146; in his analysis the author distinguishes nine ecological zones, differences in population distribution, forms of land use and type of crops or crop combinations and ethnic differences and their socio-structural concomitants.

consumption patterns in the colonial period had different effects according to these variations.

Accounts written in foreign languages about Ceylon and her people have emphasized the Sinhalese, their religion, culture and social institutions. This is natural, as they form the overwhelming majority of the population. When these accounts refer to the pre-European period, they always say during 'Sinhalese times.' It should not be regarded as discrimination against the minorities, but rather reflects the social reality. We have followed the same tradition when and where we borrow from or quote these sources or at least write in their spirit. When referring to the Ceylonese, we have mostly used the term 'natives' to distinguish them from the immigrant Europeans and Indian laborers. Ethnic names have been used either in quotations or when we look at a particular matter through other eyes.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis: *erecting signposts*

The thesis consists of nine chapters, in addition to two preludes and a few appendices. The foregoing introductory remarks apply to **Chapter One**. **Chapter Two** has three major parts. The first part examines the concept of the rational consumer and consumption as discussed in economics. In the second part, a few selected consumer behavior concepts and theories are discussed, giving special preference to economics. Here we have selected the work of Adam Smith as the point of departure, although the consumer concept goes beyond that. Consumer behavior theories, as discussed here, are not exclusively confined to economics. The last part of the chapter is devoted to a brief criticism of the consumer theory in economics and to examining recent developments in consumer studies in the social sciences. **Chapter Three** is mainly devoted to the alternative analytical framework which is employed to examine the relationship between changing consumption patterns and underdevelopment.

The prelude preceding Chapter Four gives a brief historical account of the island prior to the British period. This has been written to assist the reader who is unfamiliar with the island's history. **Chapter Four** examines the consumption patterns of the pre-British period. It covers the ancient, medieval, Portuguese and Dutch periods. This entire period could be termed the pre-modern period and illustrates the continuation of the traditional consumption patterns in general. It covers most of the consumer goods and services during the period. As the chapter shows, there were some signs of changes in consumption patterns when the Europeans began to intervene in the island's affairs.

The second prelude precedes Chapter Five. It has been written to ease the reader's journey through the rest of the thesis. **Chapter Five** concentrates on changes brought about in grain consumption, giving special preference to rice - the mainstay of the pre-modern economy. The colonial administration gave less support to grain production than did the native rulers. The island gradually began to consume more imported grain than ever before during the colonial period. The growing modern sector of the economy absorbed a considerable quantity of resources from the grain-producing sector. Some of the traditional grain products disappeared from the island and others came to the brink of extinction.

Chapter Six concentrates on all the major foods and beverages except grains. The major items included here are fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, dairy products, sugar, beverages and intoxicants. Vegetables and fruit were the most dynamic sector during the period. As perishable consumer goods, they were naturally protected against imports. Neither meat consumption nor the keeping of animals for meat were popular in the island. Imported meat was intended mainly for the European consumers or the higher income groups among the natives. As regards fish consumption, cured fish was more popular than fresh fish. The former was mostly imported from foreign sources, although there were abundance local resources in excess of local needs. Traditionally, dairy products were not popular in the island, although there was a huge number of cattle. The gradually growing demand for diary products during the period was by imports. Sugar was a new consumer item introduced to the natives. The traditional jagary or coarse sugar consumption was replaced by imported sugar. A number of intoxicants were either introduced to the native or their production and distribution were streamlined, creating severe socio-economic problems during the period.

Clothing, attire and ornaments, health and hygiene are the major topics covered in **Chapter Seven.** A certain amount of cloth had been imported into the island since time immemorial, but most of the ordinary natives' needs were supplied by the local weavers. A sufficient quantity of cotton was produced for the local weavers. During the period under review, both cotton cultivation and cloth weaving were ruined by imported articles. New attire and ornaments were introduced as consumer items, more particularly among the native higher classes and urban dwellers. The traditional medicines and treatments were replaced by the western medicines and treatments.

Human shelter, household utensils, lighting and cleaning agents are discussed in **Chapter Eight.** Modern forms of shelter were spreading among the higher income groups and in the urban areas. The poor natives

were still living in their traditional huts. Furniture was becoming common in the homes of all social groups, although more especially among the higher income groups and in the urban areas. Household utensils were also gradually changing. Kerosene was taking the place of the traditional lighting and heating fuels. Firewood was further being used as the major cooking fuel during the period.

Chapter Nine contains conclusions on the case study and the consumer theories and concepts. We give here our views about the causes of the underdevelopment from the perspective of changes in consumption pattern. It is only one factor possibly contributing to economic underdevelopment. The conclusions are followed by a few **appendices**, although the facts they contain have been taken into account in the preceding arguments. Only a few areas which seem to be important to our arguments in the conclusions have been selected for inclusion in the appendices. The appendix on the **needs of life shows** how the simple needs of the natives changed during the period. The two accounts of **monetization and trade** are an attempt to discover the changes brought about in Ceylonese society by these phenomena. We also attempt to discover whether the Ceylonese, and especially the Sinhalese, lacked an interest in trade and commerce, which are considered to be paramount for economic progress in a society based on the division of labor. The account on **roads and railways** examines the changes brought to the native's life in the subsistence village economy. The appendix describing the **ancient industries** imparts a rough idea of the ruined local crafts during the period under review. The appendix on **environmental impacts** gives a rough idea of the long-term impact on the island's environment of developments during the colonial period. It forms part of exhaustive consumption in our theoretical framework. The account of the **natives' links with the plantations** gives a testimony that the native was not against wage labor and was not conservative as suggested by some of the intelligentsia. It is also against the economic dualism which more often proposed to the period under our investigation.

PART ONE

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2

Consumer and Consumption Theories

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section examines the function of the modern economy according to the discipline of economics, paying special attention to the concept of rational consumer behavior Some of the major theories and concepts of consumption form the components of section two, where undue prominence is given to economics, while making reference to other social science disciplines when and where necessary. However, we have deliberately ignored the Marxist approach to consumption since it is not directly relevant to our analysis.

2.1 The Function of the Economy: *from micro to macro*

Mainstream economics is the study, not of man in general, but of the study of rational economic man [1] This method of analysis is also referred to as the 'rational actor model' in the economics literature.[2] Rational man is a '...sovereign individual with utilitarian forebears and is to be first studied in isolation from his fellows and from the institutions surrounding him. The behavior of social molecules, according to this view, is the effect of combining social atoms.'[3] Rationality is seen as identical to preference or

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[1] Hollis, Martin and Nell, Edward J *Rational Economic Man A Philosophical Critique of Neo-Classical Economics,* Cambridge University Press, London, 1975, p 53

[2] Hindess, Barry Rational Actor Model, in Hodgson, Geoffrey M, et al , (ed) *The Elgar Companion to Institutional and Evolutionary Economics L -Z,* Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Hants, 1994, pp 211-214 Against pure rationality, some authors argue for a 'bounded rationality', in which the consumer finds a satisfactory alternative instead of the best See, Simon, Herbert A *Administrative Behaviour,* Macmillan, New York, 1947

[3] Hollis, Martin and Nell, Edward J *Rational Economic Man A Philosophical Critique of Neo-Classical Economics,* p 264

utility maximization in modern economics discourse.[4] The sole objective of rational man is to maximize his satisfaction or utility or well-being, as it is variously referred to. It is widely known as the utility maximization behavior of rational man. While the 'rational producer' optimizes his satisfaction through profit making, the 'rational consumer' optimizes his satisfaction through consumption. As a distinct discipline, 'economics has built upon the central notion of the rational economic individual who optimises subject to constraints.'[5] Hausman equates this rational behavior with rational greed. 'Economic phenomena are the consequences of rational choices that are governed predominantly by pursuit of one's own consumption and profit. In effect, economics studies the consequences of rational greed.'[6]

In micro-economics analysis, rational choice is primarily explained in terms of marginal theories.[7] Accordingly, the marginal utility theory of consumer behavior explains the rationality of a consumer.[8] According to this theory, a consumer obtains a given amount of utility from the purchases of goods and services, but the incremental utility acquired from additional purchases of a particular product decreases as consumption increases in a given period of time. This is known as *the law of diminishing marginal utility*. There is an inverse relationship between increases in consumption and the acquisition of marginal utilities.The rational consumer maximizes his utility, subject to price and income constraints. Diminishing marginal utility provides the philosophical background to the law of

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[4] Rizvi, S. Abu Turab. 'Rationality', in Kruz, Heinz D. And Salvadori, Neri (eds.). *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economics L-Z*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1998, p. 256.

[5] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*. Routledge, London, 1993, p. 47.

[6] Hausman, Daniel M. *Kuhn, Lakatos and the Character of Economics*, p. 208; for a comprehensive work on this line of analysis see: E. F. Schumacher, E. F (1973). *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, Blond & Berggs Ltd., London, 1978 and Sulak Sivaraksa *Religion and Development*, Bangkok, 1987.

[7] Microeconomics deals with the determination of prices and quantities of individual markets and interrelationships among these markets. For example, in the commodity markets, microeconomics looks at the demand, supply and price determination of a particular commodity. See, Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993, p. 47.

[8] One exception to the rationality of consumer behavior is the phenomenon of *conspicuous consumption*. When the price of an article is extremely high, it creates a prestige value which generates a higher demand. The persuasive power of advertising in the modern world reinforces the distortion of rational consumer behavior.

demand. Since the crude model of consumer behavior was developed in the mid-19th century, the utility maximization theory has undergone considerable refinement through sophisticated mathematical models.

When we move into macro-economics, the mass of rational people in an economy are subsumed into an aggregate phenomenon.[9] Marginalism sees the macro-economic process as a summation of micro-economic phenomena.[10] In any economy, the inhabitants are mainly engaged in production, exchange and consumption.[11] For the purposes of a systematic study, economists categorize rational people into three aggregate phenomena: households, firms and government, collectively known as *agents.*[12] Sometimes they are called economic agents or economic actors. They are supposed to have the freedom to choose how much of their income they can spend on themselves and on what items, how much they can save and in what form, and how much they can give away and to whom [13]

In this simplified system, *firms*[14] are the major producers and *households* are the major consumers. The *public sector* or the *government*[15] is considered as a producer and supplier of certain kinds of special goods and services.

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[9] In contrast to microeconomics, macroeconomics focuses on broader aggregates such as the total number of people employed and unemployed, average prices, national output, and aggregate consumption In demand and supply analyses, macroeconomics looks at aggregate demand and aggregate supply See Lipsey, Richard G et al *Economics*, Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993, p 47

[10] Bleany, M F *Underconsumption Theories A History and Critical Analysis*, p 308

[11] The concept of economy is used to imply the existence of a single entity which is separate and distinct from society See: Henderson, Willie 'Metaphor and Economics', In Roger E Backhouse (ed) *New Directions of Economic Methodology*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p 351

[12] Lipsey, Richard G et al *Economics*, p 47

[13]Friedman, Milton and Friedman, Rose D *Free to chose*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1980, p 65

[14] A firm employs factors of production to produce commodities which are sold to other firms, households and government The economist assumes that most firms take their decisions with a single goal in mind to make as much profit as possible The profit maximization goal of the firm is analogous to the household's goal of utility maximization see Lipsey, Richard G et al *Economics*, pp 47-48

[15] The term government is employed in a broader sense to include all public officials, agencies, government bodies, and other organizations belonging to or under the direct administration of federal, state and local governments See Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, p 48

Dalton summarizes the functional relations of atomic agents in a market as a network of decentralized transactions. 'It consists of a multitude of individual purchase and sale transactions. Its units are individual business firms, each buying resources and selling products, and individual families, each buying consumption goods with the money incomes got from selling labour and other resources they own. The larger society as appears an aggregate of self-interested individuals in an 'atomistic' society.'[16]

The objective of economics as a separate discipline is to study the allocation of limited resources among unlimited competitive wants. The market mechanism or price mechanism is considered as the best way of allocating the scarce and limited resources efficiently and optimally.[17] 'If households, firms and the government are the main actors, the markets are the stage on which their drama take place.'[18]

Modern economies function on the division of labor and specialization, so that each individual rely on every other individual for his survival.[19] It is the result of centuries of evolution of all economic activities. However, current world production, in its extent, variety and diversity and the level of consumption are higher than in any other epoch of human history. It is an open-ended process and is still advancing to an unknown destination. 'Advanced economies are engaged in specialisation and division of labour, which increases the productivity of their resources. Individuals and countries then voluntarily trade goods they specialised in for others' products, vastly increasing the range and quantity of consumption and raising everyone's living standard. ... Western economies have enjoyed rapid economic growth over the last two centuries as increasing specialisation...'[20] In the passage of time, money has advanced to the highest position in modern economies.[21] 'If specialization permits people to

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[16] Dalton, George. *Economic System & Society: Capitalism, Communism and the Third World*, p. 38.

[17] Both efficiency and optimality are somewhat tricky and debatable concepts in economics. For the optimal allocation of resources, the Pareto Optimum principle is applied. See Blaugh, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1978, pp. 618-640.

[18] Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, p. 49.

[19] In some underdeveloped countries and even in some developed countries families produce certain kinds of goods by themselves using family labor. They partly or fully consume what they produce.

[20] Samuelson, Paul A. and Nordhaus, William D. *Economics*, MacGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1992, p. 29.

[21] Innovative financial products and growing information technology have drastically marginalized the role of notes and coins in modern economies. Credit cards and on-line

concentrate on particular tasks, money then allows people to trade their specialized outputs for the vast array of goods produced by others. ... Money is a lubricant that facilitates exchange.'[22]

Rational man as an atomic agent with maximizing behavior is one of the prime necessities in economics analysis. However, in macroeconomic analysis and applied economic research, it is assumed that consumer decisions are taken by households rather than individuals The household therefore is employed as unit of analysis instead of micro individuals.[23] 'The household is traditionally the basic unit of analysis, and much data are collected on that level, rather than on the level of the individuals that compose the family. Although the household may have one or several members, it is conventionally regarded as operating as a single unit, with a single well-defined set of objectives summarised by a household utility function.'[24]

2.2 Consumption: *tracing the boundary*

The basic meaning of 'consumption' is simply eating or using up. As a broader general expression it means the using up of anything either in production or in satisfying human wants A general English language dictionary explains consumption as the act or process of the utilization of economic goods in the satisfaction of wants or in the process of production resulting chiefly in their destruction, deterioration, or transformation [25]

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transactions are becoming norms of the day Money is rapidly becoming a reserve asset rather than being physically present in transactions This seems to have first become a reality with the introduction of SDR as a reserve asset to its member countries by the IMF in late 1960s

[22] Samuelson, Paul A and Nordhaus, William D *Economics*, 1992, pp 29-30

[23] In economic analysis, in many instances, individual and household are employed interchangeably The household is defined as ' all the people who live under one roof and who make joint financial decisions or are subject to others who make such decisions for them The members of households are often referred to as consumers Economists assume that each household makes consistent decisions, as though it were composed of a single individual ' see Lipsey, Richard G et al *Economics*, p 47
Normally families, individuals who live and consume separately, private non-profit making organizations, e g charities, churches, temples, monasteries, clubs and universities are included in the household category

[24] Sachs, Jeffrey D and Felipe Larrain B *Macroeconomics in the Global Economy*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1993, p 83

[25] *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th Edition, Britannica On-line, 1/14/00 4 43 51

This interpretation imparts two distinctive meanings to the economist: one is to look at consumption from the demand side and the other is from the supply side. From the rational, utility maximizing consumer's point of view consumption is '...the act of using goods and services to satisfy current wants.'[26] For the producer, it is part of the optimal method of factor combination in profit maximizing production behavior. Lipsey distinguishes production and consumption in very simple and clear-cut way. 'People use goods and services to satisfy many of their wants. The act of making them is called *production,* and the act of using them to satisfy wants is called *consumption.*'[27]

To look at production as a stock variable would further help to elucidate the meaning of consumption. Masses of goods and services are produced in an economy at a given point of time. All those can be brought under a few headings. 'The goods produced can be subdivided into *consumer goods* and *producer goods.* Consumer goods include those products that are usually purchased by households. ... Producer goods ... more often refer to them, *capital goods* include those products that are usually purchased by business firms. ... Clearly many goods could serve as either consumer goods or capital goods.'[28] In addition, there are intermediate goods such as raw materials and electricity in the stock of production.[29]

When we come to the production process spread over the path of time, the servicing of consumer durables such as refrigerators, furniture, motor cars is mixed with capital and other intermediary goods to create new goods and services. There are occasions on which employees are provided with ordinary consumer goods such as tea, coffee and foods by employers. The customer is provided with free drinks in some retail stores and free lunch or dinner are offered by the hosting party in business talks. None of these are counted as consumption expenditure, since these provisions perform an intermediary function. Strictly speaking, none of these conform to the maximization behavior of the rational consumer as examines in economics. It is too complex in the real world to draw a line between

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[26] Pearce, David W, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Modern Economics*, The Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1981.

[27] Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, p. 3.

[28] Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., New York, 1977, p. 3.

[29] It is not uncommon for some intermediate goods to be used as final goods. For example, wood could be used either as an intermediate good for furniture or a final good as fuel for cooking or heating purposes.

consumer goods and investment (capital) goods.[30] As a rule, the maximum consumption capability of a nation is always below the maximum production capability.[31] In practice, no nation consumes its total production; a certain amount is set apart for capital replacement (and also for net investment). The stock of goods and services that can be consumed is therefore less than the *gross national product* (GNP). The maximum limit of goods and services available for consumption is called the *net national product* (NNP) and is obtained by subtracting the value of the capital depreciated in the production process.[32]

Non-durable consumer goods such as food, beverages and fuel come to an end when they have been consumed once. Consumer durables, by contrast, such as motor vehicles, refrigerators and televisions receivers, provide long service once they have been bought. Traditionally, expenditure incurred on both consumer durable and consumer non-durable goods are treated equally and summed up as final consumption expenditure during the period in which they are bought.[33] However, spending on new houses for dwelling purposes or the upgrading of existing houses are considered as a part of capital formation. Education and health, although consumed by individuals, are treated as part of collective consumption and included under the public authorities' current expenditure.

In addition to the final consumption of individuals, there are items belong to public consumption. These include public sector current expenditure such as the salaries of civil servants, social security payments and expenditure of state enterprises. The public sector produces and supplies services such as public administration, police and military services, street lighting, public parks. Services generated through current public expenditure are either provided to the general public or consumed by the government itself on behalf of the general public. The 'Collective consumption goods are sometimes called public goods.[34] The total cost of

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30 Open University. *Consumption: Statistical sources 8*, p. 7.

31 This is true in a regime where no accumulated resources of its own or foreign transfers are available.

32 Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 3. The value of the wear and tear of capital goods are referred to as depreciation allowances or the consumption of capital.

33 Contrary to this tradition, the permanent income hypothesis takes into account the servicing of the consumer durables for a given period of time.

34 Public goods are supposed to have the characteristics of non-rival consumption and non-excludability. The classic examples of pure public goods are national defence and street lighting.

providing collective consumption goods does not increase as the number of consumers increases.'[35]

The composition of final consumption expenditure changes over time with economic progress. For example, the percentage of food consumption expenditure declines while the expenditure on consumer durables or luxuries increases. This is because the demand for food is relatively inelastic and luxuries are elastic. Regarding food consumption patterns, Engels' law has a long established history.[36] It says that as total consumption increases, the percentage of expenditure going to food tends to decrease.

Poor families have many unsatisfied basic needs. They have to spend their incomes largely on basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. When income increases, expenditure on food items goes up as they start to eat more and better. The proportion of total spending devoted to food declines as income further increases.

In some cases, the available data do not properly explain the composition of food expenditure. In economically backward countries or rural areas in developed countries food expenditure may account for a very small percentage of total expenditure. This is due to the subsistence nature of these economies or localities. This was widely visible in the pre-capitalist period in what are now developed countries.

The total expenditure in an economy can be divided into three categories in conformity with the three main macro phenomena: households' expenditure, firms' expenditure and public sector expenditure. Households' expenditure, except for a few items, is considered as consumption expenditure. Public sector expenditure, consisting of recurrent and capital expenditure, although it has an impact on the total utility of individuals, is not treated as a part of the consumption expenditure in traditional categorizations. Firms' expenditure, emanating from the derived demand for the factors of production, is also not a part of consumption expenditure. Household expenditure is the largest expenditure component in any economy and it mainly comprises the consumption expenditure. In developed economies, household consumption expenditure accounts for about two thirds of the gross national product.[37] The composition of this

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[35] Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 404.

[36] This is a law relating to change in income and change in food consumption enunciated by German statistician Ernst Engel (1821-1896). Engel's law states that the proportion of the consumer budget spent on food tends to decline as the consumers' income goes up.

[37] Froyen, Richard T. *Macroeconomics Theories and Policies*, Macmillan Publishing

expenditure has changed in parallel with increasing income. 'As households' incomes have risen over the decades, households have spent a rising proportion of their incomes on consuming services rather than goods. Today ... eating out is common; for our grandparents, it was luxury.'[38]

2.3 Consumption: *theories and concepts*

Consumption theory in economics is stated in terms of preferences and utility indices.[39] Since the beginning of the political economy in the nineteenth century, or even during the periods of mercantilism or physiocracy from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, production, which represents the supply side of the economy, has been considered as the foundation of the entire economic process. Consumption was considered as merely a passive response to production. There is no one dominant theory of consumption, but rather a range of theories drawing on different disciplinary traditions.[40]

Not only consumption expenditure, but also saving is a part of consumer behavior. The post-taxed income of a household is either consumed or saved. The main source of savings of a nation is the household sector.[41] Consumption theories, as well criticisms and reinterpretations of them, have implicitly or explicitly if not inadvertently touched upon saving. 'The traditional theory of saving is part of the general theory of consumers' choice. ...Our critique of the theory of saving is also a critique of the general theory of consumer behaviour.'[42] 'The relation between aggregate consumption or aggregate savings and aggregate income, generally termed the consumption function...' [43] Income is considered as the determinant of both consumption and savings. 'Economic studies have shown that income is the primary determinant of consumption and saving. Rich people save

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Company, New York, 1993, p. 375.

[38] Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, p. 16.

[39] Duesenberry, James S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, Harvard University Press, Mass., 1952, p. 1.

[40] Lunt, Peter K. and Livingstone, Sonia M. *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*. Open University Press, Philadelphia, 1992, pp. 12-13.

[41] The other sources of savings in an economy are firms, the public sector and the external balances.

[42] Duesenberry, James S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, 1952, pp. 32, 93.

[43] Friedman, Milton. *A Theory of the Consumption Function*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971, p. 3.

more than poor people, both absolutely and percentage of income The very poor are unable to save at all. Instead as long as they can borrow or draw down their wealth, they tend to *dissave.* This is, they tend to spend more than they earn, reducing their accumulated saving or going deeper into debt.'[44]

2.3. 1 Adam Smith: *beyond bare necessities*

Adam Smith is widely known as the founding father of modern economics and one of the pioneers of classical political economy.[45] His works are interpreted as the classic statement of liberal capitalism and *The Wealth of Nations*, his masterpiece, is considered to be the founding document of the canon of economic thought.[46] 'Nature, when she formed man for society, endowed him with an original desire to please, and original aversion to offend his brethren.'[47] Smith emphasizes human selfishness and desire as the driving force of all economic and social activities.[48] As a result of his self interest, every individual attempts to increases his satisfaction through consumption. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith recognizes that the human being may be stirred to increased economic effort by the attraction of consumer goods beyond the bare necessities.[49] The ultimate goal of all economic activities is consumption, Smith states that 'consumption is the sole end purpose of all production; and the interest of the producers ought

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[44] Samuelson, Paul A and Nordhaus, William D *Economics*, p 437

[45] Some argue that David Hume has a strong claim to being considered as the first economist, although his work as a philosopher, psychologist, and historian tends to overshadow his quality as an economist See Rostow, W W *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present With Perspective on the Next Century*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, 1990. p 18

[46] Brown, Vivinne *Adam Smith Discourse* Routledge, London, 1994 p 7

[47] Smith, A *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 1st ed 1759, vol 1 in A. L Macfie and D D Raphael (eds), The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976, iii, 2 6 quoted in Gram, Harvey 'Necessaries, Convenience and Luxuries', in Kruz, Heinz D And Salvadori, Neri (eds) *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economics L-Z,* p 162

[48] ' the desire of bettering of our conditions, a desire which comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave ' (Smith, 1950 323) This is similar to the rational man's utility maximization in post-Smithian analyses

[49] Rostow, W W *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present With Perspective on the Next Century*, P 34, makes reference to Adam Smith, *Essays* Alex Murray, London, 1869 pp 48-49

to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer.'[50] His analysis of necessity goes beyond the mere physical needs of human life.

> 'Consumable commodities are either necessaries or luxuries. By necessaries I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the *custom of the country renders* it indecent for creditable people, even if the lowest order, to be without. Under necessaries, therefore, I comprehend not only those things which nature but those things *which the established rules of decency*, have rendered necessary to the lowest rank of people. *All other things I call luxuries*; without meaning, by this appellation, to throw the smallest degree of reproach upon the temperate use of them.'[51]

Smith seems to have been inspired by moral values in demarcating the necessities and luxuries of life. 'Beer and ale, for example, in Great Britain, and wine, even in the wine countries, I call luxuries. A man of any rank may, without any reproach, abstain totally from tasting such liquors. Nature does not render them necessary for the support of life; and custom nowhere renders it indecent to live without them.'[52] Smith speaks of subsistence wages. It is central to his study, as most of the people of a nation are workers and the level of subsistence directly affects the efficiency of workers.[53] Nevertheless, he suggests '... taxes on alcohol and tobacco products to diminish their consumption of these items. Workers surely consider these are part of their conventional subsistence.'[54]

Smith '...recognises the distinction between accumulation of capital and consumption... his conception of investment is of advances made for the employment of labour and the buying of raw materials and ancillaries for the labour. Since the emphasis in this conception of investment is on the employment of new labour, producer goods are not even distinguishable *physically* from consumer goods...'[55] He '...worried that too much wealth and consumption might have detrimental results. If wealthy capitalists lost

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[50] McKendrick, Niel. Brewer, John and Plums, J. H. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England*, Europa Publication Ltd., London, 1982, p.15.

[51] Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Adams and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1863, Book V, p. 393.

[52] ibid., p. 393.

[53] Stabile, Donald. 'Theories of Consumption and Waste: Institutional Foreshadowings in Classic Writings', *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol.xxx, no.3, September 1996,p. 686.

[54] ibid., p. 687.

[55] Bleany,M. F.*Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical Analysis*,pp. 89- 90.

their ambition and become wasteful idlers like the landed gentry, their services as a role model for the lower orders would be weakened While affluence was a necessary condition for the development of human character,too much affluence could detract from it Not enough consumption by workers could threaten social efficiency,while too much consumption by the wealthy eroded the moral character that held society together '[56]

For savings and capital accumulation, parsimony is essential, the forces in this direction are slowed down by prodigality and misconduct 'Capitals are increased by parsimony, and diminished by prodigality and misconduct Whatever a person saves from his revenue he adds to his capital, and either employs it himself in maintaining an additional number of production hands, or enables some other person to do so, by lending it to him for an interest, that is, for a share of the profits As the capital of an individual can be increased only by what he saves from his annual revenue or his annual gains, so the capital of a society, which is the same as that of all the individual who compose it can be increased only in the same manner What is annually saved is as regularly consumed as what is annually spent, and nearly in the same time too, but it is consumed by a different set of people That portion is his revenue which a rich man annually saves is in most cases consumed by idle guests and menial servants, who leave nothing behind them in return for their consumption That portion which he annually saves, as for the sake of profit it is immediately employed as capital, is consumed in the same manner, and nearly in the same time too, by a different set of people, by labourers, manufacturers and artificers, who reproduce with a profit the value of their annual consumption '[57] In his analysis, two different approaches are blended in the relationship between consumption and accumulation One is the enlightenment vision of economic growth based on the increasing consumption of productive classes and the other is the classical interpretation of growth exclusively determined by capital accumulation [58]

Smith was in favor of taxes on luxuries, he deplored the extravagant and excessive spending on homes, servants, and other luxuries by the wealthy, since this spending behavior would undermine frugality and

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[56] Stabile, Donald 'Theories of Consumption and Waste Institutional Foreshadowings in Classic Writings , pp 687 688

[57] Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Book II, p 149

[58] Perrotta, Cosimo Consumption' in Heiniz D Kurz and Neri Salvadori (eds) *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economics A K*, Edward Elgar, Mass , 1998, p 188

reinvestments.[59] Like many other enlightenment economists, Smith praised thriftiness as against two kinds of conspicuous consumption behavior. One is the wasteful consumption of the aristocracy and the other the unbridled luxurious consumption of a certain section of the upper classes in society.[60] However, refraining from consumption only for the sake of hoarding is meaningless in the Smithian mechanism. 'Adam Smith doesn't mean by parsimony simply abstention from consumption, but savings and investments... When Smith talks about savings he always talks about investment, not merely hoarding.'[61]

There is no time lag between savings and investment in his analysis. Parsimony makes savings and savings simultaneously translate into investment, and economic progress continues. The starting point of the process is parsimony not mere industry. '... "parsimony, not industry, is the immediate cause of the increase of capital" and 'every prodigal appears to be a public enemy, and every frugal man a public benefactor'; and as the wealth of the nation is concerned, miscalculation and misapplication of resources on investments which turn out to be unproductive have the same effect as prodigality.'[62]

Capital accumulation facilitates the employment of productive labor. 'The need for capital accumulation as a precondition of economic progress is linked directly with Adam Smith's much-disputed distinction between 'productive' and 'unproductive' labour, which is often held to be somewhat out of character and to reflect his ill-advised admiration for the Physiocrats.'[63] Investment (spending on 'capital') sets to work productive labor, and luxury consumption (spending on 'revenue') merely employs unproductive labor.[64]

For the system to be driven forward, thriftiness is necessary in the Smithian three factor growth model 'In Smith, labour, land and capital are unambiguously the three factors of production; but the system is driven forward ... by the savings of the frugal, who are assumed to invest all savings,without leakage. ...Leakage... occurs when the rich and government

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[59]Stabile, Donald. 'Theories of Consumption and Waste: Institutional Foreshadowings in Classic Writings' *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. xxx, no.3, September 1996,p. 687.

[60] Perrotta, Cosimo. 'Consumption' p. 188.

[61] Bleany, M. F, *Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical Analysis*, p. 23.

[62] Polard, S. 'Investment, Consumption and the Industrial Revolution', in *The Economic History Review*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (second series), 1958, p. 223; makes reference to *The Wealth of Nations*, Cannan (ed.), pp. 320, 323.

[63]ibid.,p.223;makes reference to Schumpeter,*History of Economic Analysis*,1954,p. 630.

[64] ibid., p.323.

indulge in expenditures that employ "unproductive" labour.'[65] Through the employment of productive labor a nation can expect economic progress. Smith'...spoke, not of economic development, but of the"progress of England towards opulence and improvement." "Material progress" was the expression almost invariably used by mainstream economists from Adam Smith until world war two when they referred to what we would now call the economic development of the West during those two centuries.'[66]

2.3.2 T. R. Malthus: *the underconsumptionist*

Malthus made his name and fame in political economy because of his (in)famous theory of population. Nevertheless, one of his most important contributions to macroeconomic analysis was the emphasis of both the supply and demand sides of the economy, although he did not use the jargon of modern economics. He identifies, from the supply side, three key factors which contribute to economic progress and, at the same time makes reference to the demand side of the economy as providing a stimulus to supply side factors. 'Three great causes most favorable to production are accumulation of capital, fertility of soil, and invention to save labor. They all act in the same direction; and as they all tend to facilitate supply, without reference to demand, it is not probable that they should either separately or conjointly afford an adequate stimulus to the continued increase of wealth.'[67]

Malthus admits that the accumulation of capital is the most important of all to augment the wealth of a nation. Consumption has to be reduced and saving has to be increased to achieve this target. 'It is certainly true that no permanent and continued increase of wealth can take place without a continued increase of capital; and I cannot agree with Lord Lauderdale in thinking that this increase can be effected in any other way than by saving from the stock which might have been destined for consumption, and adding it to that which is to yield a profit; or in other words, by the conversion of revenue into capital.'[68]

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[65] Rostow, W. W. *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present With Perspective on the Next Century*, p. 35.

[66] Arndt, H. W. ,'Economic Development: A Semantic History', p. 457.

[67] Malthus, T. R. *Essay on Population*, Macmillan, London, 1926, p. 360; quoted in Rostow, W.W. *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present With Perspective on the Next Century*, p. 56.

[68] Malthus, T. R , *Principles of Political Economy*, Augustus Kelley, New York, 1951,

Savings in an economy is mainly carried out by the capitalist; workers' earnings are not more than their consumption. What ever may be the source, saving should not be carried out at the expense of existing expenditure, instead it should be from the new profits. 'As soon as the capitalist can begin to save from steady and improving profits, instead of from diminished expenditure, that is, as soon as the national revenue, estimated in bullion, and in the command of this bullion over labor, begins yearly and steadily to increase, we may then begin safely and effectively to recover our lost capital by the usual process of saving a portion of our increased revenue to add to it.'[69]

Overconsumption, for Malthus, runs counter to the economic progress of a country. A tolerable consumption in any economy is sufficient but extravagance is denounced, as it goes against economic progress. '...[T]reated universal all passion, impulse and wants, when considered abstractly or generally as being natural or good. ...The danger to happiness lay not in these impulses but in the 'fatal extravagances' to which they gave rise.'[70]

Not only overconsumption, but also excessive saving is harmful to an economy. 'Every act of saving tends cut down the demand for consumer goods, and when these savings are invested, the supply of goods are simultaneously augmented ... this is the Malthus position of underconsumptionist.'[71] The Malthusian theory of consumption and saving is extraordinary. 'Malthus' theory must be called "the theory of the golden mean." Accumulation is necessary and must exist, for otherwise there could be no increase in wealth, but at the same time it cannot be carried too far, or it will cut its own throat.'[72] The effective demand of Malthus' analysis is sometimes considered as a precursor to Keynesian effective aggregate demand. For the continuity of economic equilibrium, effective demand is essential. Without sufficient demand for produced goods, economic progress would come to a halt. '... effective demand suffused each dimension of Malthus' argument. His claim to originality in this respect does not depend on the *ex post* identification of a few precociously anticipatory passages suggestive of Keynesian doctrine. His central theme,

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p. 314; quoted ibid., p. 58.

[69] Malthus, T. R, *Principles of Political Economy,* Augustus Kelley, New York, 1951, pp. 431-432; quoted ibid., .p.61.

[70]Malthus, T. R. quoted in Winch, D. *Malthus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 38-39, re-quoted in Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 83.

[71] Blaug, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p. 173.

[72] Bleany, M. F. *Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical Analysis*, p. 49.

as will emerge, is in fact post-Keynesian. It is that dynamic equilibrium in a growing economy requires an endless correct proportioning and balancing of supply and demand.'[73] In Malthus'explanations, the landlords, the unproductive class of the society in many analyses, have a major role to play in maintaining the equilibrium between production and consumption. '...Malthus as praised by Keynes,stressed the progressive role played by landlords'unproductive expenditure in maintaining demand. This too, however,was linked to an underlying conflict between the virtuous pursuit of happiness and its potential for generating excess(notably in population growth in the lower orders).'[74]

When productive labor is employed in production, additional goods and services are created, but this does not essentially create purchasing power to buy all the products as expounded by the Say's law. And this will lead to an insufficient demand in the economy or to underconsumption. '...spending on productive labour... necessarily creates a deficiency of effective demand. Since workers receive less than the value of the product they produce... Nor can the gap be filled by the demand of the capitalists for "they have, by the supposition, agreed to be parsimonious, and by depriving themselves of their usual conveniences and luxuries to save from their revenue and add to their luxuries." It followed that there would be a general glut of commodities unless purchasing power were sustained by additional unproductive consumption' on the part of some group other than the capitalists and workers. This is the saving-defeats-itself fallacy mentioned earlier.'[75] Malthus conclusion was that too high a propensity to save and invest causes trouble by encroaching upon consumption.[76]

Excessive saving discourages production. This is similar to the knife edge principle of investment in economics.[77] 'The central idea to which Malthus returns again and again is that 'saving, pushed to excess, would destroy the motive to production. Even if he meant that too much planned saving, as distinct from planned investment, would destroy 'the motive to production'...'[78]The salient feature of the Malthusian over-saving analysis

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[73] Rostow, W. W. *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present With Perspective on the Next Century*, p. 56.

[74] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 83.

[75] Blaug, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, 1978,p. 180.

[76] ibid., p. 181.

[77]Knife edge is a situation where the expected rate of growth is below the warranted rate of growth, causing entrepreneurs to maintain low investment and thereby a fall in aggregate demand.

[78] Blaug, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p. 180.

is the underconsumptionist nature of this behavior. The most famous among all the underconsumptionists in the classical period was Malthus [79] Bleany gives an extraordinary place to him.

> 'I have divided underconsumption theories into Sismondian and Malthusian types The essence of the Malthusian type is the idea of over-accumulation; too much is saved and also invested This strand of underconsumptionism was bound to be killed off by the more sophisticated understanding of the relations of saving and investment heralded byKeynesian revolution '[80]

Schumpeter identifies three types of underconsumption theories.Malthus is the chief exponent of the over-saving type of underconsumption theory [81]

However, the Malthusian version of over-production provides no special contribution to the literature other than the elaboration of the Smithian explanations. 'As Schumpeter remarks, there is nothing in Malthus which cannot be found in Smith, except his remarks on general overproduction.'[82] Although he is the most famous British underconsumptionist, he is also the most difficult to be judged. 'Malthus is the most famous British underconsumptionist of this time and also the most difficult to assess. Some people have gone so far as to see in him the forerunner of Keynes, while others sympathetically reject such claims.'[83] However, in contrast to the Keynes' position of the unpredictable behavior of investment and temporary stagnation, in the Malthusian analysis, savings are definitely destined for investment, but the stagnation is permanent. He adhered to the Smith's saving is spending principle. 'Malthus consistently adhered to the Smithian saving-is-spending theorem ... Within such a model it would have been difficult to deduce even temporary lack of effective demand caused by over saving.'[84]

Malthus dealt with not only temporary overproduction, but also the possibility of permanent overproduction of all commodities and his basic argument was that, without exogenous expending by unproductive consumers', the process of capital accumulation would lead inherently to

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[79] Bleaney, Michael 'Underconsumption', in Kruz, Heinz D And Salvadori, Neri (eds) *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economics L-Z,* p 487

[80] Bleany, M F *Underconsumption Theories A History and Critical Analysis,* p 211

[81] Schumpeter, Joseph A *History of Economic Analysis*, p 740 (foot notes)

[82] Bleany, M F *Underconsumption Theories A History and Critical Analysis,* p 43

[83] ibid , p 45

[84] Blaug, Mark *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p 171

secular stagnation.[85] 'In the thousands of words that Malthus wrote on the question of general gluts, there are no more than a hundred that clearly express a theory of over-saving, where saving is not necessarily investment. The bulk of Malthus' words instead point directly to permanent and not just temporary disequilibrium.'[86]

2.3.3 J. B. Say: *demand clears markets*

Say, a French classical economist, enunciated 'the law of markets,' which exclusively demonstrated the passive role of demand in an economy.[87] His law of markets could be considered as the first and foremost theory in political economy to deals with total consumer expenditure as a part of the aggregate demand of a market economy. 'A product is no sooner created, than it, *from that instant*, affords a market for other products to the full extent of its own value ... the mere circumstance of the creation of one product immediately opens a vent for other products.'[88] What Say wanted to state here was that the act of production simultaneously creates income and purchasing power.[89] Say's popular dictum 'supply creates its own demand' came out of this principle. This is considered as the essence of Say's Law of markets, which aims to characterise the *essential* feature of exchange mechanism within a specialised economy.'[90]

At any given point of time in any economy, production will create a certain amount of income that is equal to the value of goods produced. This is equally true in modern national income accounting principles. The value of national production is equal to the national income. This income is ultimately sufficient to purchase the entire production. For Say's law of markets, the aggregate demand of the economy is always sufficient to purchase a full employment level of output, as the purchasing power grows

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[85] ibid., p. 171.

[86] ibid., p. 181.

[87] Say expounded the 'the law of markets, in a famous chapter of his *Traité d' économie politique*. Law of Markets is the usual English version of the French *loi des débouchés*. see. Schumpeter, Joseph A. *History of Economic Analysis*, p. 615.

[88] Say, J. B. *Treatise on Political Economy*, Longmans, London, 1821; quoted in Snowdon, Brian, Vane, Howard and Wynarczyk, *A Modern Guide to Macroeconomics: An Introduction to Competing Schools of Thought*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Hants, 1994, p. 52.

[89] Snowdon, Brian, Vane, Howard and Wynarczyk. A *Modern Guide to Macroeconomics. An Introduction to Competing Schools of Thought*, p. 52

[90] ibid., p. 52

out of production itself. If there is any excess or deficit of products in the market, it will be automatically cleared up by the market mechanism. The prices of excess products will fall and the demand for them will increase. This will work in the opposite direction where there are insufficient supplies. This excess or insufficient supply are only temporary phenomena and the market will eventually achieve equilibrium.

The prolonged periodical fluctuation of economic performance, booms and busts, a common phenomenon in a market economy, has no place in Say's law of markets.

> 'Depression cannot be permanent because supply creates its own demand on a micro- and macroeconomic level through automatic price interest variations. This postulation has been called 'Say's equality', asserting in effect that an excess supply of goods or an excess demand for money tends to be self correcting. If demand prove insufficient to sell out all goods at cost-covering prices, including the going rate of profit, price must fall. The purchasing power of nominal cash holding will rise, and everyone will find himself holding excess real balances; there is an excess demand for money. In the effort to reduce the level of individual cash holdings, the demand for commodities increases until the excess supply in commodities eliminated.'[91]

In general, classical political economists, notably Ricardo and James Mill, supported Say's law, which they believed also held true not only for the barter economy, but for the money economy. Mill is especially credited with the sharing of Say's law.[92] This was true for the classical economists in the way they had explained the role of money. For them, money is nothing more than a medium of exchange in a competitive market economy where the tendency for full employment is always at work.[93] More importantly, the speculative role of money was absent in the classical economic analyses which were later introduced to economic analysis by J. M. Keynes in 1930s.

Say's law laid the foundation for the market mechanism, especially for the macro level analyses in classical political economy. Neoclassical economics came into being with the marginalist revolution in the middle of the 19th century, which subsequently supplanted classical political

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[91] Blaugh, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p. 159.

[92] Baumol, William J. 'Say's (at least) Eight Laws, or What Say and James Mill May Really Have Meant', *Economica*, 44, May 1977, p. 145.

[93] Snowdon, Brian, Vane, Howard and Wynarczyk. *A Modern Guide to Macroeconomics: An Introduction to Competing Schools of Thought*, p. 52.

economy, remain faithful to Say's market law.[94] Since recently supply-side economists have been using Say's Law of markets to back up their argument, which is that the global supply creates its own demand in such a way that any macroeconomic disequilibrium or unemployment can only be born from exogenous shocks or the defective functioning of markets.[95]

In classical political economy, consumption and investment - the two components of aggregate demand - are related to the interest rate. 'Interest' is considered to be a reward for thriftiness. Household consumption was interpreted as negatively related to the rate of interest. If households reduced consumption expenditure and increased savings, that would reduce the interest rate and so the cost of investment. More investment expenditure essentially offsets the deficit created by declines in demand. This mechanism closely conforms to Say's law of markets. This law was originally propounded for the barter economy. To supply one good in barter unavoidably leads to demand for another. A long line of classical economists believe that the law is equally true in a money economy.[96] Baumol's major conclusion, drawn after the re-examination of Say's and Mill's texts was that, Say's law is related to long-term economic growth and not primarily to the short-term problem of unemployment and overproduction. 'The major emphasis of Say's and Mill's arguments was that investment (productive consumption), rather than the consumption of luxuries, pyramid building or military expenditure (unproductive consumption), are the effective means to promote growth.[97] Schumpeter maintains the importance of Say's contribution to economics literature as '... [H]is real great contribution to analytical economics, is his conception of economic equilibrium ...Say's work is the most important of the links in the chain that lead from Cantillon and Turgot to Walras.'[98]

2.3.4 Underconsumption Theories: *sweet and sour*

Underconsumption theories have a long history, beginning during the epoch of Physiocracy in France and gaining prominence during the era of

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[94] Beaud, Michael and Dostaler, Gilles. *Economic Thought since Keynes, Routledge*, London, 1997, pp. 13-14.

[95] ibid., pp. 117-118

[96] Shapiro, Edward. *Macroeconomic Analysis*, 2nd ed., Harcourt Brace & World Inc., New York, 1970, p. 343.

[97] Baumol, William J. 'Say's (at least) Eight Laws, or What Say and James Mill May Really Have Meant', p. 160.

[98] Schumpeter, Joseph A. *History of Economic Analysis*, p. 492.

classical political economy. The orthodox economists generally dismiss underconsumption theories with contempt, and in orthodox histories of economic theory underconsumption authors, with the exception of Malthus, rarely receive more than passing reference.[99]

Underconsumption makes reference to chronic deficiencies of demand for consumer goods and is associated with such phenomena as economic depression, underutilization of production capacity, unemployment and falling prices.[100] Where underconsumption exists in the sense that the ratio of consumption to output is below the optimum level, it follows that the ratio of unconsumed output to total output must be too high.[101] The causes of underconsumption in a market economy are interpreted variously, ranging from simple over-saving theories to fully-fledged persistent crises. Blaug summarizes all of the underconsumption arguments thus: 'The Malthusian over saving argument is only one version of the under-consumption theory. The socialist version holds that stagnation sets in because the share of wages in total income tends to fall as income increases. The Hansen-Keynes version holds that stagnation is the result of declining rates of return on investment. But the core of all these versions is the idea that consumption and investment cannot be expected to increase indefinitely at constant proportional rates of growth.'[102] Bleany examines the 'underconsumption' theory with reference to two important common elements.

> 'An underconsumption theory is a theory of the capitalist economy which contains both of the following two elements: (1) The idea that a state of depression is not just a phase of the industrial cycle or the result of the temporary conjunction of circumstances but is the state towards which the economy naturally tends in the absence of offsetting factors; (2) The idea that this is the result of a persistent tendency towards insufficiency of demand for *consumption* goods.'[103]

Haberler says of the underconsumption theory: 'its best-reasoned form... the underconsumptionist theory uses 'under-consumption' to mean 'over-saving', and that in 'the under-consumption or over-saving theory ... savings are as a rule, invested ...'[104]

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[99] Bleany, M. F. *Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical Analysis,* p. 9.

[100] Bleaney, Michael. 'Underconsumption', p. 486.

[101] Schneider, Michael, 'Under consumption', *Palgrave Economics Dictionary*, No 4, p.741.

[102] Blaugh, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p. 173.

[103] Bleany, M. F. *Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical Analysis,* p. 11.

[104] Haberler, G. *Property and Depression,* League of Nations, Geneva, 1937. Cited in

Schumpeter suggests that underconsumption theories can be classified into three categories. 'We shall distinguish three types of underconsumption theories ..., first, ... over saving type ... second, the non-spending type that emphasises disturbances which arise from saving decisions that are not offset by decisions to invest ..., which is an old one - to be attributed, e.g., to Quesnay and several of his French predecessors ..., third, the mass poverty type that attributes gluts to the inability of labour, owing to low wages, to 'buy its own product.' The important sponsors of this theory were Sismondi and, much more definitely, Rodbertus.'[105]

Mark Blaug distinguishes two versions of underconsumptionist theories - a crude version and a sophisticated version. The former simply ignores the fact that aggregate demand equals consumption and investment expenditures. It appeals to the fact that most consumers are workers who can never buy back the product they produce, because the value of output necessarily exceeds the value of the wages paid out. Hence, a certain volume of spending on luxury articles and labor services out of profits and rents is necessary to ensure continued production.

The more sophisticated version of the underconsumption theory concedes that total income is equal to total expenditure in an economy for any given period. As long as the investment in every period fills the gap between income and consumption, any given income level can be maintained indefinitely. However, investment not only creates income, but also adds to capacity in subsequent periods. If next year's consumption and investment are identical to this year's, excess capacity must appear, and this excess capacity discourages investment. As soon as investment falls, incomes fall and a slump sets in.[106]

Bleany points out that, although there is no proper theoretical foundation for the underconsumption concept, it is not short of contributors to the literature. 'Underconsumptionism does not constitute a theoretical system. As it is defined, it might rather be described as a thesis about the nature of a capitalist economy, its long-term tendencies and the role of the consumption within it.'[107] The dramatic changes in the world economy at times guide scholars to make a new contribution to the literature. The great depression of the 1930s was one of them, which affected the writing of Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, Joan Robinson, as they had witnessed the bad effects of the period. In the same way, the depression after the Napoleonic

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Schneider, Michael, 'Under consumption', p. 741.

[105] Schumpeter, Joseph A. *History of Economic Analysis*, 1972, p.740 (footnotes).

[106] Blaugh, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, pp. 171-173.

[107] Bleany, M. F. *Underconsumption Theories: A History and Critical*, p. 17.

wars and the slump of 1873 had a big impact on the writings of the underconsumptionists.[108] Both Keynes (**see *absolute income hypothesis***) and the underconsumption writers are, more importantly, concerned with the demand side of the economy. Keynes, however, emphasized the demand for investment goods in the aggregate demand, while the underconsumptionists in contrast emphasized the demand for consumer goods. For them the demand for investment would simply make matters worse. Underconsumptionists confined their analysis to the real sector of the economy, leaving no important role for the monetary sector to play in the economy. 'The underconsumptionist position is that aggregate demand in the private sector of a closed economy is *always* insufficient, or forever threatening to become insufficient, to buy all goods at cost-covering prices.'[109]

2.3.5 Theory of the Leisure Class: *breaking boundaries*

Thorstein Bunde Veblen made a name and gained fame among social scientists because of his unorthodox innovative vision about social phenomena. He invented the concept of the leisure class to refer to social classes whose consumer behavior is distinct from others in the society. He called it conspicuous consumption. It is characterized by pageantry display. The purpose of the consumption is to create an impression on others rather than to satisfy needs. It is a lavish and wasteful consumption. The goods and services are used for the purposes of symbolizing or establishing one's own position as a member of a particular social class, especially of the upper classes.

The term 'conspicuous consumption' first appeared in his *The Theory of Leisure Class,* published in 1899. Its meaning involves many of Veblen's similar terms such as conspicuous leisure, conspicuous waste, pecuniary canons of taste, predatory culture, pecuniary reputation, pecuniary emulation. The leisure class is essentially a latent function of 'conspicuous consumption' and 'conspicuous waste' as a symbol of upper class status and as a competitive method of enhancing individual prestige. He argues that '...much of consumption spending, especially that of the affluent, was done to show off their wealth; it was evidence of their prowess as money makers. To earn status, the wealthy had to show off with displays of luxury. This

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[108] ibid., p. 211.

[109] Blaugh, Mark. *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, p. 171.

was an idea as old as Adam Smith.'[110] Conspicuous consumption rejects the rational economic man as the basic unit of analysis of the economic process,[111] and this makes it an exception to rational consumer behavior. Veblen was sharply critical of the marginal utility analysis in economics and rejected the contention that man is a 'lightning calculator of pleasures and pains.'[112] The hedonistic and atomistic conception of human nature implicit in neoclassical economics is vital for rational behavior. In contrast to this tradition, Veblen's analysis of human nature is primarily about the innate habits in the social process, and a greater part of human behavior is attributable to habit

Veblen attempts to trace conspicuous consumption to cultural facts, ranging from family life, taste standards, dress, religious observances, government, industry and higher studies. He placed a great reliance on the behavior of the group and in support of this he drew heavily upon his knowledge of anthropology and social behavior [113]

Some goods would have a special attraction to the consumer. When the price of a good is extremely high, it creates a prestige value leading to a much higher demand. As the prices fall, some consumers perceive this as a reduction in the quality in the good and cease to buy it. This consumer behavior is contrary to the law of demand. The outcome of this paradoxical consumer behavior is that the market demand curve exhibits a steeper slope than would otherwise be predicted. This phenomenon is known as the Veblen effect in economics literature [114]

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[110] Stabile, Donald 'Theories of Consumption and Waste Institutional Foreshadowing in Classic Writings', p 695

[111] Roll, Eric. *A History of Economic Thought*, Faber and Faber Ltd ,London, 1973, p 445.

[112] Whittaker, Edmund *Schools and Streams of Economic Thought*, Rand Mcnally & Company, Chicago, 1961, p 315

[113] Bell, John Fred *A History of Economic Thought*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1953 p 545

[114] This is different to the Giffen Paradox, where the demand for a good tends to fall as its price falls, and demand tends to increase as its price increases. Both cases thus apparently contradict the law of demand The Giffen Paradox occurs when the absolute size of the income effect (with respect to price) is greater than the negative size of the substitution effect and the sign of income effect changes from positive to negative This case applies essentially to foodstuffs and is based on the empirical observation by Sir Robert Giffen (1837-1910) that poor people buy more bread as its price rises He noticed that rises in the price of bread had made it impossible for the poor to afford a discrete amount of meat which they used to consume alongside the bread. In order to maintain the same level of consumption, they now had to buy more bread than before Those goods such as bread and potatoes are called Giffen goods

Conspicuous consumption 'is actually a realm of artificial imagery ... created by desperate compulsion to escape from the abstract sameness of things by a kind of self-made person and *promesse de bonheur*.'[115]

Veblen is the founder of the school of thought which is now known as institutional economics. For him, economic institutions were no more than the attitudes and mores which they encapsulated. However, he never classified institutions systematically, instead he categorized them broadly by such terms as 'patterns of pecuniary emulation', or 'patterns of conspicuous consumption', or again as 'patterns for the maintenance of national integrity' (nationalism), 'patterns to maintain the price system' (capitalism). The theory of the leisure class has only a very limited relevance to the problems of political economy, but the chief importance of Veblen's analysis is culture.[116] For him, the present level of man and his institutions is only one stage in cultural development. In this dynamic process, two institutions play a pivotal role. They are private property, which has pecuniary connotations, and the technological methods of production, which provide the goods to satisfy wants. He disliked capitalism because of its causally related exploitative and wasteful nature[117]

'Veblen spent little time with explaining the natural subsistence component of necessities. His *tour de force* was an explanation for the customary elements of subsistence. Within his framework, the convention of a decent standard of living was a human institution that had to be explained.'[118] The economic environment in which Veblen lived inspired him to present unorthodox views on the market economies. 'Veblen and Simmel had begun to develop their sociology of new ways of life in western societies at the time when new department stores had opened for the first time, in the centres of big cities. These department stores offered to shoppers, all under one roof, a variety of goods from groceries, furniture, clothing, crockery, kitchen utensils, to new electrical equipment, as these

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115 Adorno, T W 'Veblen's Attack on Culture', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9, no 3, 1941, pp 389-413, quoted in Tilman, Rick *Thorstein Veblen and His Critics, 1891-1963 Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Perspectives*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1992, pp 192-193

116 Roll, Eric *A History of Economic Thought*, p 447

117 Tilman, Rick *Thorstein Veblen and His Critics, 1891-1963 Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Perspectives*, p 197

118 Stabile, Donald 'Theories of Consumption and Waste Institutional Foreshadowings in Classic Writings' p 695

latter products were developed and manufactured for a mass market.'[119] For liberal interpreters Veblen realized only the invidious aspects of conspicuous consumption, not the positive ones, the theory of consumption is flawed because he failed appreciate sufficiently the freedom and variety of choice available in a market economy [120]

2.3.6 Absolute Income Hypothesis: *predictable consumption*

The absolute income hypothesis is a brainchild of J. M. Keynes. Consumption expenditure is only one component in his aggregate demand/expenditure analysis. It is, on the whole, a predictable and stable component in aggregate demand.[121] Other components - investment and public expenditure - are unpredictable, exogenously determined and non-functional in his analysis. Keynes was the first to emphasis the functional relationship between consumption and income, although some economists had argued in that direction before him. His theory of consumption is called the absolute income hypothesis because it explicitly assumes that consumption is related either to a household's or a nation's absolute income.[122] This theory apparently opened the floodgates for further studies on consumption in the years that followed. Among the many hypotheses proposed by Keynes, the relation between income and consumption has been subject to the most intensive studies.[123]

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[119] Bocock, Robert *Consumption Key Ideas*, Routledge, London, 1993 pp 15-16

[120] Tilman, Rick *Thorstein Veblen and His Critics, 1891-1963 Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Perspectives*, p 281

[121] The misery of the great depression in 1930s shocked the minds and hearts of the believers and followers of the free market mechanism as the most efficient way of allocating scarce resources Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) was a strong answer to both the proponents of the free market and the lingering depression of the time He intellectually justified government intervention in the market mechanism through public expenditure, mostly through fiscal policies, in order to remove the insufficient aggregate demand which emerges periodically in market economies, creating recessionary forces and unemployment problems. One of the striking features of Keynesian economics is the fundamental shift of the economic analysis from the supply side to the demand side

[122] Glahe, Fred R *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, pp 93, 94

[123] Modigliani, Franco and Brumberg, R E 'Utility Analysis and the Consumption Function An Interpretation of Cross-section Data,' in K K Kurihara (ed), *Post-Keynesian Economics*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1954, p 338

The consumption function - the schedule detailing the relationship between aggregate current consumption expenditure and aggregate current disposable income - is the cornerstone of the theory. The relationship between change in income and the change in consumption expenditure is called the marginal propensity to consume. 'In explaining the shape of the relationship between income and consumption he invoked the fundamental psychological rule according to which the value of the marginal propensity to consume is between zero and one.'[124] The share of consumption expenditure to income is called the average propensity to consume, which is also between zero and one. The former is smaller than the latter in numerical terms. The absolute income hypothesis proposes that consumption expenditure increases with increasing income but not as much as increasing income. As a result, a greater proportion of income is saved as income increases. Therefore, the average propensity to consume would be found to decline with increasing total income. The slope of the consumption function becomes flatter as income rises. This is due to a psychological rule that governs the behavior of consumers.

> 'We take it as a fundamental psychological rule of any modern community that, when its real income is increased it will not increase its consumption by an absolute equal amount, so that a great amount must be saved The fundamental psychological law, upon which we are entitled to depend with great confidence both *a priori* from our knowledge of human nature and from the detailed facts of experience, is that men are disposed, as a rule and on the average, to increase their consumption as their income increases, but not by as much as the increase in their "income "'[125]

Some would prefer to maintain that this remark is only an aside and not central to Keynes' consumption hypothesis. He neither pressed nor explicitly stated that there is any secular trend in the average propensity of consumption to decline with the increase in income.[126] Friedman says it

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[124] Hadjimatheou, George *Consumer Economics after Keynes· Theory and Evidence of the Consumption Function,* Wheatsheaf Books Ltd , Brighten, 1987, p 2

[125] Keynes, J M *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money,* Macmillan, London, 1942, p 96

[126] Hadjimatheou, George *Consumer Economics after Keynes Theory and Evidence of the Consumption Function,* p 2, quotes Hansen, A *A Guide to Keynes,* McGraw-Hill, New York, 1953, p 75 and makes reference to Shackle, G L S *Economics for Pleasure,* Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed 1968, p 136, Gordon, R J *Macroeconomics,* Little, Brown and Company, Boston, Mass , 3rd ed , 1984, p. 420, Branson, W H *Macroeconomic Theory and Policy,* Harper & Row, New York, 2nd ed , 1979 and Tobin, J 'The Consumption Function', *International Encyclopedia of the*

was maintained less definitely by Keynes.[127] To sustain any given level of income and production in a country, total expenditure on consumption, investment and government purchases must be equal to the national income. The difference between consumption expenditure and income must take up other expenditure components in aggregate demand. Consumption would adjust to any level of income. Investment expenditure is volatile and unstable. The periodical failure to use the potential savings of a nation is the main cause of recessions and depressions. Keynes proposes an expansionary fiscal policy mainly to counter the recessions and depressions in market economies. Consumption expenditure is a part of these policies. 'Arguments in the *General Theory* suggest that government policies can bring about changes in consumption in a number of ways, including the transfer of resources, through taxation and other methods, from one group of households to another; more specifically, measures aimed towards the reduction of the inequality in the distribution of income were expected to increase the aggregate propensity to consume.'[128] Keynes' theory is often presented as a theory of effective demand and Keynesian policies as those of demand stimulation.[129]

Keynes placed the emphasis on effective aggregate demand to ensure full employment in an economy under a given technology and population. This was contrary to the existing orthodox economic theory, which emphasized that the cause of unemployment was excessive real wages and real interest rates. If money wages were reduced and thereby consumption cut, employment would increase, because firms would hire more laborers at lower wages and increased savings would lead to greater investment. Monetarists who criticize Keynesian policy prescriptions conceive of an inelastic aggregate supply in an economy. This view emphasizes the aggregate supply of the economy and is sometimes called 'Reaganomics.'[130]

Social Sciences, vol. 3, pp. 358-68 reprinted in J. Tobin, *Essays in Economics*, vol. 2, North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1968, p. 82.

127 Friedman, Milton (1957). *A Theory of the Consumption Function*, p. 3; makes reference to J. M. Keynes. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., London, 1936, pp. 96-97.

128 Hadjimatheou, George. *Consumer Economics after Keynes: Theory and Evidence of the Consumption Function*, p. 2; author quotes Hansen, A. *A Guide to Keynes*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1953, p. 227.

129 Beaud, Michel and Dostaler, Gilles. *Economic Thought since Keynes*, p. 117.

130 ibid., p. 117.

2.3.7 Relative Income Hypothesis: *economics plus*

A number of consumption behavior studies revealed that the absolute income hypothesis had produced erroneous predictions and that consumption behavior is more complicated than originally presumed.[131] The relative income hypothesis advanced by Dusenberry in 1949 is one of the attempts to rectify the flaws made by Keynes.[132] He begins his work by criticizing the two fundamental assumptions of Keynes' theory. 'These assumptions are (1) that every individual's consumption behavior is independent of that of every other individual, and (2) that consumption relations are reversible in time. It is apparent that these two assumptions are just as essential to the general theory of demand as to the consumption function. Indeed, this must be so since the Keynesian consumption function is a special case of general demand theory.'[133]

Duesenberry's hypothesis has two parts. The first part proposes that the average propensity of a household (or individual) to consume is determined by its position in the income distribution. In other words, the share of income consumed is determined by the relative income of household and not by the absolute income as proposed by Keynes. 'According to our hypothesis,...According to our theory' Duesenberry continues, 'the savings ratio is independent of the absolute level of income.'[134] The second part proposes that households find it easier to adjust to rising incomes than to falling incomes.

Dusenberry suggests that consumer satisfaction is not merely determined by the absolute amount of consumption. 'A real understanding of the problem of consumer behaviour must begin with a full recognition of the social character of the consumption pattern. From the viewpoint of preference theory or marginal utility theory, human desires are desires for specific goods; but nothing is said about how these desires arise or how they are changed. That, however, is the essence of the consumption problem when preferences are interdependent. ...We know, of course, that certain goods are purchased to maintain physical comfort. We also know that certain activities are an essential part of our culture, or at least, parts of it. ... Nearly all purchases of goods are made, ostensibly at least, either to provide physical comfort or to implement the activities which make up the

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131 Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 97.

132 Duesenberry, James. S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, Harvard University Press, 1949.

133 ibid., p. 1.

134 ibid., p. 57

life of our culture. Frequently, of course, both kinds of requirement are satisfied by the same goods.'[135] For Dusenberry, the consumer is not a inward-looking character and he seeks to compare what he consumes with others in a social competition. The individual's consumption is influenced by what he sees of his neighbors' and workmate's spending.[136]

The consumer has an innate desire to conform with those who are at the top of the consumption ladder. They belong to the higher income groups of the society. They are the ideals to be conformed to by the lower income groups. The lower income groups have a low propensity to save. The propensity to save becomes greater as they move upward in the income distribution groups. The consumers in the lower income groups respond to the social pressure created by a high propensity to consume rather than a high propensity to save. The lower the income level, the smaller the propensity to save and vice versa. If the absolute income of every household doubles, then the household's relative position in the income distribution would remain unchanged, so that it would continue to consume the same proportion of income. The average propensity to consume will remain constant as income increases if the income distribution remains unchanged. In other words, a general increase in absolute income, leaving the relative income distribution unchanged, will leave unchanged both the social pressures and the responses to them in terms of share of income consumed. Even if economic growth is accompanied by a growing population, the ratio of consumption to income would remain constant if the income distribution remains constant.[137]

As the household's income rises, its standard of living rises accordingly. The higher standard of living soon becomes the expected standard of living. As household income begins to decline the household seeks to maintain the higher standard of living. The decline in consumption is slower than the decline in income. Therefore, in a recessionary phase of a trade cycle, the average propensity to consume rises. Consumption does not decline in proportion to declining income. This suggests that households find it easier to adjust to rising income than to falling income. The short-run and the long-run income and consumption relationship therefore produces a sort of 'ratchet effect.'[138]

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[135] ibid., pp. 19-20.

[136] Brooman, F. S.*Macroeconomics*, George Allen &Unwin Ltd., London, 1973,p. 115.

[137] Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 99.

[138] Duesenberry, James S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 114-116.

> This "ratchet effect" is an important link between the theory of economic development and trade cycle theory. It explains why each cycle is at a higher level in terms of income and consumption than the proceeding one. In each boom, whatever its cause, the gains in productivity since the last boom are exploited. Income rises to a level above the last boom. When investment falls off, income and consumption decline, but not to the level to the previous depression. The ratchet keeps the economy from slipping back all the way and losing all the gains in income acquired during the proceeding boom.'[139]

Keynes' law holds good over a cross-section of the modern economy, but it fails in data supplied from time series. Dusenberry argues that this is because continuing cultural changes create a rising demand for increased consumption and this is very acceptable and sympathetic argument for anthropologists.[140] 'Keynes' fundamental psychological rule left plenty of scope for clarification. Duesenberry was the first economist for a very long time to seek a sociological instead of psychological theory.'[141]

The different social groups in the same country and in the same city would have different consumption and saving patterns. Dusenberry highlights some evidences from selected cities in the United States and concludes that each income group of the Negroes save more than their respective whites.[142] For him, saving is a residual. The decision to save is taken after the required consumption expenditure have been met. The communal pressure for spending has an edge over the savings. The consumption is socially visible and the savings is hidden.

2.3.8 Life Cycle Hypothesis: *atomistic planning*

The life cycle hypothesis was originally proposed by Modigliani and Brumberg.[143] It was further elaborated by Modigliani and Ando after the untimely demise of Brumberg.[144] The Keynes' proposition that a high

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[139] ibid., p. 115.

[140] Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 28.

[141] ibid., p. 27.

[142] Duesenberry, James S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 50-52

[143] Modigliani, Franco and Brumberg, R. E. 'Utility Analysis and the Consumption Function: An Interpretation of Cross-section Data,' 1954.

[144] Ando, Albert and Modigliani, Franco, 'The Life cycle Hypothesis of saving: Aggregate Implications and Tests,' *American Economic Review*, March 1963 and Ando,

proportion of income is saved as real income increases is contrary to this hypothesis. 'We claim instead that the *proportion of income saved is essentially independent of income*; and that systematic deviation of the saving ratio from the normal level is largely accounted for by the fact that short-term fluctuations of income around the basic income capacity of the household, as well as gradual changes in this earning capacity may cause accumulated savings to get out of line with current income and age.'[145] The life cycle hypothesis suggests that an individual (a household) consumes a constant (or slightly increasing) proportion of the present value of his lifetime income. Therefore the individual's level of consumption does not depend just on the current income. Individuals are assumed to plan a lifetime pattern of consumer expenditure based on expected earnings over their lifetime.[146] Consumption is quite unresponsive to change in current income. The average individual is normally a net borrower when young, a net saver in the middle years to pay back earlier debts and prepare for retirement and, finally, a net dissaver during retirement.[147] Thus the average propensity to consume in the early and late years is higher than in the middle years.

> The life cycle hypothesis attempts to account for the dependence of consumption and saving behaviour on the individual's position in the life cycle. Young workers entering the labour force have relatively low incomes and low (possibly negative) saving rates. As income rises in the middle years, so does the saving rate. Retirement brings a fall in income and might be expected to begin a period of *dissaving*.'[148]

The planning horizon of the individual consumer is his whole lifetime. He tries to spread his lifetime consumable resources evenly over his life and

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Albert and Modigliani, Franco 'The "Permanent Income" and the "Life Cycle" Hypothesis of Saving Behaviour: Comparison and Test.' *Consumption and Saving*, vol. 2, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1960. The original and elaborated versions are acronymed as LCH and MBA, respectively

145 Modigliani, Franco and Brumberg, R. E. 'Utility Analysis and the Consumption Function: An Interpretation of Cross-section Data,' p. 430.

146 Modigliani, Franco. 'The Life Cycle Hypothesis of Saving, the Demand for Wealth and the Supply of Capital', *Social Research*, June, 1966, pp. 160-217. quoted in Froyen, Richard T *The Macroeconomics Theories and Policies*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1993, p. 381.

147 Glahe, Fred R *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 105.

148 Modigliani, Franco 'The Life Cycle Hypothesis of Saving, the Demand for Wealth and the Supply of Capital' , quoted in Froyen, Richard T *The Macroeconomics Theories and Policies*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1993, p. 382-83.

accumulate enough savings during his earning years to maintain the same consumption standard during his years of retirement. The average individual's income is lower at the beginning and the end of his life than in the middle years. The life cycle hypothesis argues that the maximization of average individual utility produces a stream of consumption. The present value of the consumption stream cannot exceed the present value of the income stream. Given the objective of a constant or slightly rising consumption stream and an income stream that rises and then falls, the individual will normally be a net borrower when young, a net saver in the middle years to repay earlier debts and prepare for retirement and, finally, a dissaver during retirement.

> 'The life cycle hypothesis also explains the evidence from cross-sectional family budget studies showing that higher income families consume a smaller portion of income ... than do lower income families. A higher portion of high-income families might be expected to be those in their peak earning years.'[149]

The life cycle hypothesis could be regarded as a certain type of income, consumption and saving theory. Nevertheless, it ignores the class differences in a society and it is an age-specific theory of distribution. Modigliani evaluated the life cycle hypothesis twenty years after it was proposed. 'From this historical survey of the origin of the LCH and of what has happened in the last twenty years in terms of both understanding fully and verifying its implications, I trust it is not presumptuous on my part to suggest that the LCH has proved a very fruitful hypothesis, capable of integrating a large variety of facts concerning individual and aggregate saving behaviour, on the foundations of the received theory of consumer's choice and a few plausible postulates. Needless to say, it would be naïve and presumptuous to suppose that the model can dispose once and for ever of the whole area of saving behaviour.'[150]

2.3.9 Permanent Income Hypothesis: *back to fundamentals*

The formulation of the consumption function in terms of permanent income

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149 Froyen, Richard T. *The Macroeconomics Theories and Policies*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1993, p. 385-386.

150 Modigliani, Franco. 'The Life cycle hypothesis of saving twenty years later' in Andrew Abel (ed.) *The Collected Papers of Franco Modigliani*, vol. 2, MIT press, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 71-72.

rather than of total wealth explains the name 'permanent income hypothesis.'[151] This hypothesis is attributable to Milton Friedman.[152] It postulates that the consumption of a household is proportional to its permanent income, which is the expected average long-term earnings from its human and non-human wealth over the planning horizon. Human wealth comprises a household's labor services, while non-human wealth comprises such assets as money, bonds, equities, real estate and consumer durables. Friedman accepts that the concept of permanent income is not simple.

> 'Our conclusion about the meaning of permanent income cannot be stated so simply. We can think of the factors affecting the consumer's receipts as having a range of time dimensions: some factors affect his receipt only for a day, others for a week, a year, two years, and so on. We have approximated this continuum by a dichotomy. Effects lasting less than a certain time period are considered transitory, those lasting for a longer time, permanent. The length of this time period we call the consumer unit's horizon. A number of different pieces of evidence support the highly tentative conclusion that the horizon so defined is about three years.'[153]

Friedman '... observes that each household posses an array of assets...from which it expects to receive streams of returns. For each stream, the household is assumed to have some appropriate rate of discount, not necessarily the same for different types of assets. For example, for those assets for which there exist active markets the objective discount rates might be equal to the prevailing market rates of return on the respective assets. In the case of the other assets for which there is no active market, particularly for human wealth, the discount rate is completely subjective and may be quite high. In fact, Friedman has suggested that this value might be as high as 33.3 per cent a year. The sum of the present values of these future streams of income is the total wealth of the household. By multiplying the present values of the future stream from each asset by its respective discount rates and summing up, we get the permanent income as Friedman defines it.'[154]

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151 Glahe, Fred R. *Macroeconomics Theory and Policy*, p. 109.

152 Friedman, Milton. *A Theory of the Consumption Function*, 1957.

153 ibid., p 221.

154 Ando, Albert and Modigliani, Franco. 'The "Permanent Income" and the "Life Cycle" Hypothesis of Saving Behaviour: Comparison and Test.' *Consumption and Saving*, vol 2, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1960, p. 78.

The permanent income hypothesis assumes that the individual has a consumption program for his entire life, within which he makes his day-to-day budgeting decisions.[155] 'The idea is implicit that consumption involves commitments that cannot be cancelled out at short notice just because a ship comes in late or the harvest is bad.'[156]

The permanent household consumption is the planned consumption from permanent income. In addition to the permanent consumption, in any given period of time, there are random unplanned elements in consumption; which are referred to as transitory consumption. Similarly, in any period of time there are a transitory or unplanned elements of income, which may be either positive or negative. Permanent consumption is a function of permanent income. Transitory consumption is a function of transitory consumption. In the long run, income growth is dominated by permanent income, since the positive and negative transitory changes in income cancel each other out.

The permanent income hypothesis postulates that the individual has a consumption program for his life. He make his day today budgeting decisions within this program. The rational objective for the consumer is to even out consumption over his life span. The reserves will provide the consumer with income from retirement to the grave if the plan is worked out properly. If the plan overestimates the life expectation and the individual dies early, there would be an unplanned legacy for his descendants. If he lives too long, his reserves will run out and he will die in poverty.

The theory of permanent income is a strictly economic approach in the sense that it assumes that the choice between consumption and saving is made rationally.[157] Friedman assumes that savings are provisions for the future, not a residual category. His great contribution, a significant advance over any previous thinker on the subject, is to take the whole life span into his account of the consumer's choices.[158]

It is maintained that both the life cycle and permanent income models have many common elements.[159] There are occasions in which both the life cycle hypothesis and Friedman's theory are brought under one umbrella

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[155]Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, p. 30.

[156] ibid., p. 30.

[157] ibid., p. 29.

[158] ibid., p. 30.

[159] Ando, Albert and Modigliani, Franco. 'The "Permanent Income" and the "Life Cycle" Hypothesis of Saving Behaviour: Comparison and Test', pp. 74-75.

and referred to as permanent income theories. There is a distinction between the Keynesian type of theories and the permanent income theories. Lipsey maintains that the 'Keynesian-type of theories seek to explain the amounts that households spend on purchasing goods and services for consumption. This concept is called consumption expenditure. Permanent income theories seek to explain the actual flows of consumption of services that are provided by the commodities that households buy. This concept is called actual consumption.'[160]

Interestingly and contrary to the existing tradition, consumer durables are considered by the permanent income hypothesis as a part of the household's stock of wealth. The imputed value of the flows of services provided by the consumer durables is considered as consumption. The purchase of consumer durables is counted as saving, and only the value of the services actually consumed is counted as consumption.[161] If this is true, saving is no longer disposable income minus all consumption expenditure; it is now income minus the value of actual consumption.[162]

There is no difference in applying the consumption concept to the services of non-durable goods in Keynesian absolute income theories and permanent income theories, but to durable goods. 'With reference to services and non-durable goods, expenditure and actual consumption occur more or less at the same time, and distinction between the two concepts is not important. ... a durable consumer good yields its services over a long period of time ... an important characteristic of durable goods is that expenditure to purchase them is not necessarily synchronised with consumption of the stream of services that the goods provide.'[163]

The permanent income hypothesis has in common with the life cycle hypothesis the property that long-term income is assumed to be the primary determinant of consumption.[164] The policy implications that follow from the permanent income hypothesis are similar in many respects to those that follow from the life cycle hypothesis.[165]

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160 Lipsey, Richard G et al. *Economics*, p. 525.

161 ibid., p. 526.

162 ibid., p. 526.

163 ibid., p. 525.

164 Froyen, Richard T. *Macroeconomics Theories and Policies*, p. 391.

165 ibid., p. 394.

2.4 Consumption: *conceptual poverty*

Consumer studies have been spreading through the social sciences for quite some time. As a distinctive discipline, economics has a long history of consumer studies to its credit, although it they were basically confined to microeconomic analyses. The demand concept in macroeconomic analyses had been assigned to a much lower position until the Keynesian revolution in the 1930s. Jean Baptiste Say is considered to be the culprit for this gross neglect.[166] Consumer behavior in economics is examined as a part of demand theories.[167] Some sophistication has been brought into the analysis by mathematical techniques and statistical estimation within the existing premises. Nevertheless, it is maintained that consumer theory in economics has occupied a narrow terrain since the marginalist revolution in the nineteenth century.[168]

Recently, consumer studies in economics have met with severe criticism from a number of quarters. This criticism varies from attacks on the very foundation of consumer behavior - the rational man hypothesis - to the relegation of the role of consumption into an unimportant place in the entire economic process. Some of the criticisms can be brought under a few headings.

Assumptions: The traditional consumption theory embodies a core set of well known assumptions, each of which has been the object of criticism by economists and non-economists alike.[169] It is maintained that the economist tacitly assumes that the consumer is fully informed and perfect by overlooking the fact that tastes are highly variable, easily influenced by example, custom, suggestions and constantly change with the accumulation of experiences.[170] The consumer is conceived as maximizing his satisfaction, subject to price and income constraints, although in the real world he is subject to multitudes of factors. In consumer behavior theories the consumer is confined to a narrow behavioral or motivational calculation

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166 Vries, Jan de. 'Between purchasing power and the world of goods: understanding the household economy in early modern Europe', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods,* Routledge, London, 1993, p. 85.

167 James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Redevelopment.* St. Martin's Press Inc., New York, 1993. p. 1.

168 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, pp. 7, 46-53.

169 Scitovsky, Tibor. *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction,* p. 2.

170 ibid., p. 5.

individual utility maximization.[171] To reach to optimum consumer satisfaction, even in this restricted field, there would have to be consumer sovereignty. In practice the consumer has to abide by laws and regulations in the society where he lives, he cannot simply respond to the market signals alone.[172] The consumer sovereignty concept is a myth, even in a fully developed market economy.[173] Some radical traditions in economic thought deny the validity of consumer sovereignty. They see the consumer merely as a victim of production and producers. The line of causation between production and consumption is perceived to run primarily from the producer's direction; he decides what is to be produced, does not respond consumers' needs or, worse, he manipulates them through advertising.[174]

The cultural and the institutional factors under which the consumer lives limit how far one can proceed through the sovereignty principle. It is not a part of consumer behavior analysis in economics. 'Over the decision most vital of all to his well-being, the epoch and society wherein he lives, the individual alas is unable to exercise any choice whatsoever. Born into a certain social and physical *milieu,* born into a certain home, much of the pattern of his life follows as a matter of course. Many of the consequences that arise from nature and nurture, from inherited natural endowments and from upbringing, he will be powerless to influence.'[175]

The basis of the neo-classical economics of consumer behavior is the satisfaction derived through the consumption of goods and services. Therefore, every rational person naturally tends towards high preference combinations of goods rather to a low preference combination. The preferences in neo-classical economics have not been sufficiently and openly examined. 'In practice, neo-classical economists have treated the preferences category as a Pandora's box rather than a researchable area, clinging tenaciously to the assumption of fixed preferences, and choosing to analyse changing consumer demand strictly in terms of income and price effects.'[176] The rational individual sometimes encounters a dilemma when he finds combinations of goods which delivers the same satisfaction.

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171 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 47.

172 Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, p. 37.

173 Mishan, E. J. *The Cost of Economic Growth,* Staples Press, London, 1969, pp. 109-112.

174 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 21.

175 Mishan, E. J. *The Cost of Economic Growth,* p. 113.

176 Felix, David. De Gustibus Disputandum Est: Changing Consumer Preferences in Economic Growth, in *Explanation in Economic History*, Vol. 16, 1979, p. 263.

Horizontal theorization: This is about the application of generalized universal theories to any person in any society. It is said that economics is the most extreme version of a horizontal theorization of consumption.[177] The principle of utility maximization subject to price and income constraints is generalized across the economy as a whole to all commodities.[178] It is obvious that human society is full of diversity when taken atomistically or on a micro basis, and even at the macro level when taken collectively. Nevertheless, all the existing consumption analyses can be considered as horizontal understanding or horizontal theorizing; whatever factors are taken to be of importance are presumed to be applicable across the whole economy or society.[179] The conclusions derived from the generalized theories may not be universal or eternal, society is dynamic and diverse in nature. The theories formulated for the different strata of a society, *the vertical theories* , would be an answer to this problem, although it is complicated and difficult to apply them easily to macro level analysis.

Stagnation: The premises of the reasoning of consumer behavior in economics have been subject to criticism because of their prolonged stagnation. Overall demand theory, for which consumer behavior is used as foundation, has remained essentially unchanged since the last century.[180] Ever since the beginning of consumer analysis, it has adhered more or less strictly to the same assumptions and the same conclusions, although society has gone through profound changes in the meantime. Economics provides a notorious classical example of its presumption that consumer preferences have remained unchanged through generations.[181]

The theory of consumption has long been a part of different disciplines, but has not developed as a separate discipline, but now it is being developed as a separate subject discipline, although it did emerge as a separate academic discipline in the 1960's[182] But it has not yet developed and expanded as a fully-fledged separate discipline. And it has also failed as a new field to move beyond a multidisciplinary to an interdisciplinary approach.[183]

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[177] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 47.

[178] ibid., p .4.

[179] ibid., pp. 3-4.

[180] ibid., p .47.

[181] ibid., p. 23.

[182] ibid., p. 40.

[183] ibid., p. 39.

Highly mathematical foundation: Since consumer behavior was introduced to economic analysis it has become increasingly mathematical. This has brought criticism from many quarters of other social sciences. 'Economics of consumer behavior suffers from severe conceptual poverty. To some extent this is compensated for (some might say camouflaged) by mathematical and statistical techniques which are extremely sophisticated relative to other social sciences and a source of intimidation to the uninitiated. But these characteristics isolate economics from other social sciences and render it incapable of finding a partner for an interdisciplinary marriage...'[184] Mathematical sophistication helps the economist to forecast consumption-related phenomena. This forecasting ability is suspect because of its methodological deficiency. 'Economists rarely draw the distinction between the normative models of consumer choice and descriptive or positive models. Although the theory is normatively based (it described what rational consumers *should* do), economists argue that it also serves also well as a descriptive theory (it predicts what consumers in fact do). ... exclusive reliance on the normative theory leads economists to make systematic, predictable errors in describing or forecasting consumer choices.'[185]

Overemphasis on the Supply Side: The undue prominence given to the supply side of the economy in the discipline has led to the rethinking of the importance of the demand side. 'The growing dissatisfaction with methodologies that have given priority to production has led to attempts to redress the balance by focusing on consumption independently of production. The result has been the failure to develop, and hostility towards, a theoretical structure that unites production and consumption. This is understandably in the case of neo-classical economics. For whilst consumption through utility maximization is the ultimate economic determinant, understanding of consumption is severely impoverished. It is confined to demand analysis, which has remained essentially unchanged over the century or more since the marginalist revolution. It depends upon assumptions that are false and limited, which have the effect of narrowing the scope of inquiry - viz., that rational consumers should maximise utility

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184 ibid., p. 47.

185 Kagel, J and Battalio, R, 'Experimental Studies of Consumer Behaviour Using Laboratory Animals', *Economic Inquiry*, 1975: quoted in Eirik G. Furubotn, 'The Old and the New Institutionalism in Economics,' in Peter Koslowski (ed.) *Methodology of the Social Sciences, Ethics, and Economics in the Newer Historical School*, Springer, London, 1997, p. 443.

subject to price and income constraints on the basis of unchanging and innate preferences.'[186]

Not only in theoretical analyses, but in historical analyses in economics also, consumption is regarded as a dependent rather than an independent variable. 'Within economic history, for example, this has been reflected in a degree of technical determinism - that production and supply make the world what it is over the long term. For a prospective grounded in the orthodoxy of neo-classical economics, this is justified by the assumption that the market can be assumed to work perfectly in the long run, so that supply rather than demand becomes the determining factor. Paradoxically, this goes hand in hand with the view of the consumer as sovereign in determining the composition of what is produced (and how much is saved rather than consumed), even if the level of output overall depends upon the dry statistics of the growth in inputs and total factor productivity.'[187]

Emphasis on developed economies: The consumption theory in economics has little or nothing to do with the economy of developing countries. The many consumer models that have been proposed since Keynes have been largely developed with reference to mature, western-type capitalistic economies.[188] Consumption is essentially social, relational and active rather than private, atomistic or passive.[189] This is highly relevant to a developing economy, where social and family bonds are stronger and more decisive than in a developed economy.

2.5 Consumption Beyond Economics: *through to the center*

Compared with many other social phenomena, consumer behavior was for a long time not taken seriously by many social sciences. Only in the recent past, has the consumer been given the center stage in academic debates.[190]

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186 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, pp. 254-255.

187 ibid., p. 254.

188 Modigliani, F. and Tarantelli, E. 'The Consumption Function in a Developing Economy and the Italian Experience', *American Economic Review*, 65, December 1975, pp. 825-842; reproduced in *The Collected Papers of Franco Modigliani*, vol. 2, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1980, p. 305.

189 Appadurai, A. Commodities and the Politics of Value. In A. Appadurai (Ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 31.

190 Gabriel, Yiannis and Lang, Tim. *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary*

Consumer studies have now received wider attention in a number of disciplines in the social sciences, most importantly in sociology, anthropology, cultural theories, gender studies and history. Consumer behavior became an important concept in sociology, and in social theory more generally, during the 1980s.[191] 'Psychologists have redirected their sights towards an understanding of what drives modern consumers. Cultural theorists have increasingly recognised the spirit of our age ... not in modes of production, government, class structure or art but in modes in consumption, life-style, identities. Since the collapse of communism in the Eastern block, consumerism is now commonly described as an unchallenged ideology of our times.'[192]

Consumption studies have now become one of the major study areas in the social sciences. 'In our thinking, our practices and our theory, the role of consumption has been thrust into a position of prominence in a way that is historically unprecedented.'[193] The study area changes according to the objective of the discipline and the theoretical framework. The concept of consumption has a variety of meanings, depending upon the major theoretical framework of which it is a component part.[194] 'The discipline of economics, ... argues that consumption bestows utility; in sociology, it may well be status or social position; in psychology, it is a conditioned response to gain a level of well-being; in anthropology, it has been interpreted in terms of its symbolic role in ritual ... More critically, consumption can also be viewed as a passive response to the goods that manufacturers offer, with tastes manipulated to guarantee sales and profitability.'[195]

The definition of consumption in recent studies has expanded beyond the traditional boundaries. 'Consumption, *par excellence*, concerns the position and activity of the individual in capitalist society. It involves the interpretation of objects, ideologies and culture.'[196] The boundaries of consumption extend to the social and cultural aspects of the society. 'Consumption, in the late twentieth-century western forms of capitalism may be seen, therefore as a social and cultural process involving cultural

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Consumption and its Fragmentations, p. 1.

191 Bocock, Robert. *Consumption: Key Ideas*, 1993. p. 3.

192 Gabriel, Yiannis and Lang, Tim. *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentations*, p. 1.

193 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 3.

194 Bocock, Robert. *Consumption: Key Ideas*, p. 5.

195 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 3.

196 ibid., p. 254.

signs and symbols, not simply as an economic utilitarian process.'[197] In some extreme cases consumption has infringed into the domain of production and exchange in the economy. ' "Consumption" refers here (as it does throughout this book) to the processes by which consumer goods and services are created, bought and used. This definition broadens the traditional view. It adds to the traditional emphasis on the act of purchase, the *product development* that must precede purchase and the *product use* that must follow it.'[198] The boundary of consumption is sometimes extended to the social and cultural aspects of the society. 'Consumption, in the late twentieth-century western forms of capitalism may be seen, therefore as a social and cultural process involving cultural signs and symbols, not simply as an economic utilitarian process.'[199] 'In explaining consumption, it is not sufficient to depend upon its proximate determinants - in tastes, prices or habit - nor to swing to the opposite extreme and render the system of production the sole or main determinant of what is consumed, important though it is. Production is itself variously organised. Whether as mass production of uniform commodities or not. Equally important, production is connected to consumption by shifting systems of distribution, by retailing as well as by cultural reconstruction of the meaning of what is consumed.'[200] With all the differences between the objectives of consumer behavior, there is one irrefutable property they all share in common. It is all about human behavior or human society. The difference depends only on what is emphasized and what is neglected.

2.6 Summary

The theory of consumer behavior in economics is studied as a part of the demand analysis. Its philosophical foundation is all about the utility maximization rational individual. There are sufficient difficulties and problems in incorporating the rational consumer into the real world. In macroeconomic analyses all atomistic consumers are summed up into aggregate phenomenon. However, for many instances, house hold is applied as the basic unit of analysis in applied researches. There are number of consumption theories instead of one dominant theory in the

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197 Bocock, Robert. *Consumption: Key Ideas*, p. 15.

198 McCracken, Grant. *Culture & Consumption*, p. 139 (end notes).

199 Bocock, Robert. *Consumption: Key Ideas*, p. 15.

200 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 4.

literature. All are with some qualifications and sufficient evidences to stand its own feet.

On the one hand, the consumer study ranges from extreme cases of optimistic to pessimistic and on the other it ranges from micro to macro analyses. For example, the rational consumer behavior is optimistic, it accept the optimal allocation of scarce resources while the underconsumption theories see the chronicle instability within the same system; the absolute income hypothesis is about the aggregate phenomenon and the life cycle hypothesis about the micro foundation of the aggregate function. Again, the consumer theory would be either institutional (Relative income hypothesis) or about the irrational behavior(leisure class). While some theories are within the perimeters of economics discipline some not. Since recently, the consumer behavior theory in the discipline has gone to severe criticisms.

3

Changes in Consumption Pattern and Economic Underdevelopment: *An Analytical Framework*

This chapter consists of two major parts. The first part focuses on consumption history and economic growth, and consumption and economic development. All of these have theoretical backing, either weak or strong, in the existing literature. The second part is about consumption and economic underdevelopment. It runs counter to the existing literature and development theories. This second part is about our alternative theoretical framework, which throws light on the rest of the work.

3.1.1 Consumption History and Economic Growth: *calling to witness*

Academics have traditionally regarded consumption as an impotent force in the process of long-term socio-economic formation It seems to have been an obvious practice among economists.

> To the social and cultural historian the economists' great fault, in a word, the privileging of production making supply the blade of supply and demand scissors that does all the cutting If consumption simply shadows production, its explanatory power must be confined to matters of secondary importance, hence, what Neil McKendrick calls the 'shameful' neglect by economic historians of a consumer revolution '[1]

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[1] De Vries, Jan 'Between purchasing power and the world of goods understanding the household economy in early modern Europe', p 85 , makes reference to Neil McKendrick, 'Introduction' in Neil McKendrick, et al (eds) *The Birth of Consumer Society The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, 1982

The social science domain in general, however, has been subject to considerable criticism in recent years for its failure to look at the history of consumption.Traditionally, historical studies have been interested in supply side questions, which obviously claimed the high ground in the study of the British industrial revolution.[2] A scholastic examination of the relationship between consumer goods and changes is rare and there is no theoretical scheme to provide a general perspective from which to study this relationship.[3] In general, 'The history of consumption has no history, no community of scholars, no tradition of scholarship. ... Each has had to find his or her own way through uncharted territory. Each has suffered what Veblen called 'the penalty of taking the lead.'[4] Nevertheless, there are some reasons for the marginalization of consumer studies in economic history.

One of the factors that impeded historical studies of consumer behaviour was the overemphasis of the production or supply side of the economy in transformation processes, ignoring the demand side.[5] The traditional consumer studies focused on the experiences of the modern market economies and ignored the pre-capitalist period. The second reason for the lack of historical studies may be the incompatibility of the theoretical frameworks designed for capitalism with historical experiences. There were no relatively autonomous spheres of consumption and production in the pre-capitalist period as there are in the capitalist period.[6] Thirdly; and perhaps most importantly, what hindered historical studies on consumer Behaviour was insufficient information and general unavailability of statistical sources to establish concrete arguments and to improve the quality of analyses.

> 'Before 1800 there are very few statistical sources, and those that exist are incomplete, fragmentary and often indirect. They concern specific categories, such as the army, the navy, convents and colleges rather than the whole populace; privileged groups (the accounts and registers of the nobility) rather than the lower class; the towns records of levies and taxes on consumption and decisions concerning the supply of grain) rather than the rural population (in the

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2 Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen. *The World of Consumption*, p. 75.

3 Ringer, Fritz K. 'Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning', p. 130.

4 McCracken, Grant. *Culture and Consumption*, p. 28.

5 Ringer, Fritz K. 'Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning', .p. 5.

6 Deleuze, G. and F. Guattri, *Anti -Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1983; quoted in Biddiek, Kathleen. 'The Link that Separates· Consumption of Pastoral Resources on a Feudal Estate', in Henry J. Rutz and Benjamin S. Orlove (ed) *The Social Economy of Consumption*, Monographs in Economic Anthropology, No 6, University Press of America, New York, 1989. p. 122.

> latter case effective research is rendered almost impossible by the large amount of home produced food that they consumed.)'[7]

Only since the recent past, have a few attempts been made to study consumer history. Some authors conceived that consumer goods and consumer behaviour have played unexpected and diverse roles in the ongoing transformation of the modern world.[8] One of the most spectacular attempts has been made by historiography scholars, who have made an attempt to keep consumption on an equal footing with production and supply.

> The historical community, following the lead of Braudel and the example of McKendrick, has recognised that the "great transformation" of the West included not just an "industrial revolution" but also a "consumer revolution. . .an inquiry into the development and origins of modern consumption is now well underway, and that this task now occupies a growing segment of the historical and social scientific community.'[9]

McKendrick et al maintain that a revolutionary changes took place in British consumption during the eighteenth century and the roots of such changes even extend back to the previous centuries. The consumer revolution is the analogue to the industrial revolution on the demand side of the equation. It puts demand on an equal footing with the supply side.[10] Plumb says that the '...distinguishing feature of capitalistic development in the west during the two and half centuries has been not only accumulation, which has received more than its fair share attention but also consumer expenditure.'[11]

Both economic history and economic theory have overemphasised the supply factor in economic growth.[12] Economic changes including

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[7] Aymard, Maurice. 'Dietary Change in Europe from 16th to 20th Century, with Particular Reference to France and Italy', In Henry Baudet and Henk van der Meulen (eds.) *Consumer Behaviour and Economic Growth in the Modern Economy* , Groom Helm, London, 1982. p. 111.

[8] Ringer, Fritz K. 'Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning', p. 130.

[9] McCracken, Grant. *Culture & Consumption*, p. 3.

[10] McKendrick, Neil, et al. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England*, p. 9.

[11] Plumb, J. M. 'The Commercialisation of the Leisure', in McKendrick, Neil et al (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England*, p. 265.

[12] Gilboy, E. (1932) 'Demand as a Factor in the Industrial Revolution', in A. Cole (1932), *Facts and Figures in Economic History: Articles by Former Students of Edwin*

economic growth and development are long-term processes. After examining the economic literature, Ben Fine and Leopold conclude that '... on theoretical grounds, the argument that demand as such can play a significant role in long-run economic change is extremely weak...'[13] This has always been the case in the mainstream analysis of economic changes. The neo-classical economists have consistently tried to explain production as a linear process; the use of primary factors as the starting point and consumption as the end.[14] Their analysis is 'of a one-way avenue that leads from "factors of production" to "consumption goods."'[15] For them, consumption is simply a passive response to production and supply and it has no autonomous power to generate economic growth. The arguments on these lines seem to have found the refuge in the dictum of 'no production, no consumption.' However, there are rare occasions on which neo-classical economics is interpreted against its traditional linearity.

> 'In neoclassical economic analysis, preference - along with technology and government policies - determines economic outcomes, including prices and wages, rates of growth in output and distribution of income The indogeneity of preferences implies that the economy also affects tastes regarding goods, leisure, and other activities In other words, preferences both influence economic outcomes and are in turn influenced by the economy Preferences and the rates of economic growth are correlated partly because tastes, such as lower rates of preference for present utilities, are more conducive to rapid economic growth However, the indogeneity of preferences implies that growth and preferences are also related because economic outcomes help form tastes '[16]

Francis Gay, Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press, reproduced in Hartwell (ed), 1967, quoted in Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen *The World of Consumption*, p 75

[13] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen *The World of Consumption*, p 79; The authors' discussion here on consumption and growth (pp 73-84) covers many aspects of the relation between consumption and growth However, they have failed to isolate consumption from the aggregate demand in an economy Another weak point is that they give undue preference to modern market theories in order to disqualify McKendrick's theory of consumer revolution in history Furthermore, the authors have failed to grasp properly Keynes' demand analysis Keynes priority was not about the deficiency of household consumption, but inadequate demand for investment

[14] Gilibert, Giorgio 'Circular Flow', *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economic A-K,* p 107

[15] Sraffa, Piero(1960) *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities· Prelude to a Critique of Economic Theory,* Cambridge University Press, London, 1977, p 93

[16] Becker, Gray S *Accounting for Taste,* Harvard University Press, London, 1996, pp 18-19

This line of argument pushes the analysis from linearity to circularity. However, circular analysis has long been in use in economic analysis. If circularity is accepted, then consumption does have a role to play in the production process. It is widely accepted that circular flow was first introduced into economic analysis by the *Physiocrats*. Circular flow, according to Gilibert, has been applied across the economics literature of all schools of thought. François Quesnay is considered to be the first person to apply circular causation to economic analysis[17] A modified version of circular flow is now widely employed in macroeconomics textbooks as a forerunner to Keynesian national income employment analysis.

Circular causation analysis was popularised in economic analysis in the recent past by Gunnar Myrdal, although there had been a few others in the same camp.

> 'Myrdal's central thesis was the idea of "circular causation." But the idea of circular causation was already present in Allyn Young in 1928, not to mention Rosenstein-Roden, and Nurkse in 1953 referred repeatedly to the circular nature of the problem of getting growth going in poor countries.'[18]

For Myrdal's *principle of circular and cumulative causation*, the function of the market is a continuous process, in which economic forces interact upon one another in a cumulative way, pushing the system further away from the initial position, creating uneven economic development.[19] The revitalisation of circular analysis prompted others to add to the literature on the same lines.[20]

The concept of the 'vicious circle of poverty' advanced by Nurkse is another circular causation analysis. It says that underdeveloped countries usually suffer from the vicious circle of poverty. 'It implies a circular constellation of forces tending to act and react upon one another in such a way as to keep a poor country in a state of poverty.'[21] It is about the low

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[17] Gilibert, Giorgio. 'Circular Flow', p. 107.

[18] Krugman, Paul. 'The Fall and Rise of Development Economics', pp. 46-47; makes reference to Allyn Young. 'Increasing Returns and Economic Progress', *Economic Journal*, vol. 38, Dec. 1928; and Ragnar Nurkse, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, Oxford University Press, 1953.

[19] Ricoy, Carlos J. 'Cumulative Causation', *Palgrave Dictionary I*, p. 731.

[20] A brief literature survey of low-level stagnation on the lines of the vicious circle: see Myrdal, Gunnar. *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, vol. iii, Pantheon, New York, pp. 1844-45 (footnotes).

[21] Nurkse, Ragnar. *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962, p. 4.

level of equilibrium trap that keeps an economy in a stagnated state of underdevelopment. More interestingly, Nurkse identifies that the circular causation of the vicious circle of poverty exists on both the supply and the demand sides.

> 'On the supply side, there is a small capacity to save, resulting from the low level of real income. The low real income is a reflection of low productivity, which in its turn is due to largely to the lack of capital. The lack of capital is a result of the small capacity to save, and so the circle is complete. On the demand side, the inducement to invest may be low because of the small buying power of the people, which is due to their small real income, which again is due to low productivity. The low level of productivity, however, is a result of the small amount of capital used in production, which in its turn may be caused at least partly by the small inducement to invest.'[22]

Young's interpretation of circular analysis is a dynamic counterpart of Adam Smith's dictum that the division of labour is limited by the extent of the market. 'In Young's interpretation, the expansion of markets leads to an "increasing use of roundabout methods of production" and to a "progressive division and specialisation of industries" which results in a rising efficiency of production.'[23] Scitovsky sees production and consumption as interdependent responses. 'Without production to generate earnings, there is nothing to spend on, and without consumer demand and spending, our profit motivated economy will not produce. That explains why a puritanical disdain for spending and consumption can impede production. No more output can be produced than consumers are willing to buy...'[24] To refrain from consumption is considered to be a blessing for economic growth in a number of growth theories and economic analyses. For example, Chelliah maintains that capital accumulation is key to solving the problems of developing countries. A high national savings ratio is essential to economic growth. The capitalist and socialist countries could achieve this goal by keeping down the level of the living standard of people either through low wages and great inequality of income distribution, or through the restriction of resources allocated for the production of consumer goods.[25]

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[22] ibid., p. 5.

[23] Ricoy, Carlos J. 'Cumulative Causation', p. 731; makes reference to Young, A. 'Increasing Returns and Economic Progress', *Economic Journal*, 38, 1928, pp. 527-542.

[24] Scitovsky, Tibor. *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*, pp. 212-213.

[25] Chelliah, Raja J. *Fiscal Policy in Underdeveloped Countries*, Allen and Unwin Ltd.,

Although there are not many explicitly declared theoretical arguments to support the thesis that consumption initiates the economic process or economic growth, the literature is not essentially poor in arguments made in that direction. For example, changes in consumption which occur as a result of the changes in social customs that are completely free from savings, investments, technological advancement, changes in prices or income or government policies have nothing to do with the supply side of the economy. A classical example is provided by Adam Smith, possibly referring to eighteenth century European experiences.

> 'Custom has rendered leather shoes a necessary of life in England The poorest credible person of either sex would be ashamed to appear in public without them In Scotland, custom has rendered them a necessary of life to the lowest order of women, who may, without any discredit, walk about barefooted In France, they are necessaries neither to men or to women, the lowest rank of both sexes appearing there publicly, without any discredit, sometimes in wooden shoes, and sometime barefooted '[26]

It is not impossible to surmise here that custom creates new desires, new demands, new consumption providing stimulants for innovation, production and supply. Similarly, Kindleberger points out the economic pressure received by canneries as a result of the increased demand for canned and tined goods.

> 'It may be worthwhile to furnish concrete examples A revolution in the consumption of canned goods in the United States and the spread of tinned gasoline and kerosene through out the world which led to an increase in the number of canners in the United States, from 97 in 1871 to 411 in 1880, and 886 in 1890, produced a boom in tinplate, especially in the period 1875-1880 100 new mills were constructed in Britain in 1879 alone But there was little technological change '[27]

The starting point of the argument in both cases here emanates from the demand side of the economy, not from the supply side. Not only the producers but also the consumers are encouraged for more works by desire for consumption.

London, 1971, pp 21-22

[26] Smith, Adam *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,* Book v, p 393

27 Kindleberger, C P 'Foreign Trade and Economic Growth Lessons from Britain and France', *The Economic History Review,* Second Series, Vol XI, Nos 1, 2 & 3 1961-1962, p 296

> 'To the extent that consumption desires may motivate prospective consumers to expand more work efforts and exercise greater ingenuity, the incentive effects could increase total production enough to support this consumption, while maintaining or increasing the level of capital formation '[28]

The introduction of new goods encourage the division of labour, more products and stimulation for the producers. Referring to the new commodities from Asia and America in the 17th century, De Vries argues that expanding consumption could increase production without a technological improvement.

> ' new household luxuries, and status objects for ordinary people were being popularised and made available in retail shops . The impact of desirable goods newly available on local markets could be just as far reaching as farm enclosure or rural industry in increasing market dependence The peasant who bought a pair of shoes or cotton calicoes in the market ceased making their equivalents himself He not only entered the market to buy, he also entered the market to sell because a portion of his household's labour was diverted from self-provision of crafts to market production of food. When thousands of households shift their production and consumption habits in this way, the economy benefits from trade creation and specialisation The economy becomes more productive even though no technological advances have been introduced '[29]

De Vries links the inefficient utilisation of resources to the pre-industrialised societies insufficient demand 'In the pre industrial economy under-utilised resources and chronic underemployment testify to the frequent inadequacy of demand.'[30] The growing markets facilitate a progressive 'horizontal diversification' of industries in which consumer goods are produced. They also relate to the introduction of new products and to the increasing diversification of similar goods. In the case of intermediate and capital goods industries, specialisation would operate both horizontally and vertically.[31] Swan says consumption causes economic

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[28] Freedman, Debora S 'The Role of the Consumption of Modern Durables in Economic Development', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* vol. 19, no. 1, October 1970, p 26

[29] De Vries, Jan *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis 1600-1750,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, p 181, the book covers the life of five generations of Europeans lived in the last great epoch before the onset of industrialisation

[30] ibid , p 176

[31] Ricoy, Carlos J 'Cumulative Causation', p 731, makes reference to Stigler, G 'The

growth when the consumer is innovative and seeks to satisfy growing needs through new methods The consumer would be either the creator of the innovation or become a consumer of the innovations of others

> 'Innovation in consumption creates demand for new products and services So when aspiration and the desire for association, distinction and variety are powerful forces, then opportunities for employment appear to expand The desire for association in consumption leads to a growth in demand for products owned by our peers televisions, radios, video recorders, mobile phones, and so on Such products are often in competitive and elastic supply, so the increase in aggregate demand leads to growth in supply The desire for distinction leads to a growth in demand for products that others do not consume '[32]

Kataro proposes a bilateral instead of a unilateral relation between income and consumption

> 'Observation of long-term trends in individual countries as well as international comparisons show a positive correlation between *per capita* income and *per capita* consumption expenditures However, we should not assume that the existence of this positive merely means that *per capita* consumption is high in the developed countries because *per capita* income is high in those countries Indeed the implication could be the reverse the *per capita* income might be high because the *per capita* consumption is high, and a high *per capita* consumption requires a high level of production and of income Theoretical investigations have established that in a macro-system the relation between income and consumption is not unilateral but bilateral The long term rise in *per capita* income and *per capita* consumption expenditures are inextricably interrelated and sustain each other in the sense that the failure of one is bound to affect the other [33]

The public sector might play a role in initiating economic growth from the demand side of the economy

> 'In the nineteenth century, development of mass production in both food and clothing industries was spurred by government procurement policies Guaranteed demand in the form of large-scale orders for military uniforms and packaged foods encouraged technical innovations But, for the most part, these

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Division of Labour is limited by the extent of the Market', *Journal of Political Economy*, 59, June 1951, pp 185-193

[32] Swann, Peter G M 'Innovation in Consumption and Economic Growth', in Jonathan Michie and John Grieve Smith (eds) *Globalization, Growth, and Governance Creating an Innovative Economy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, p 169

[33] Kataro Tsujimura and Gottfried Frensil 'Consumption', in *Marxism, Communism and Western Society A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, vol II, p 191

> innovations arose in the factory, without any direct public investment in the process of production The state supplied the market rather than the technology But the ultimate consumer was an individual soldier, of the same size and shape and with same appetite in civilian as in military life '[34]

Spending on wars is traditionally considered to be unproductive. It is no more than spending on pomp and pageantry or the building of monuments. Contrary to this view, List after observing the unproductive use of resources for the English wars, says that these might be injurious as well as beneficial.

> 'Strictly speaking, material wealth may have been consumed unproductively, but this consumption may, nevertheless, stimulate manufacturers to extraordinary exertions, and lead to new discoveries and improvements, especially to an increase of productive powers This production then becomes a permanent acquisition, it will increase more and more, while the expense of the war is incurred once for all '[35]

Whether it is possible to initiate economic growth from the demand side of the economy is always a matter of controversy. In the strict linear analysis, production is the essential point of departure, but there are possibilities of initiating economic growth within non-strict linear and circular analyses. Economic history is not essentially poor in providing evidence to support the demand side analyses.

3.1.2 Consumption and Economic Development: *mutual benefits*

In this part we examine the relationship between consumption and economic development in the light of social science literature. This is a never-ending task since the literature is very copious and still growing. The exercise is somewhat complex and complicated.

The overwhelming majority of economists and social scientists seem unimpressed by the discussions on consumption and economic growth. Nevertheless, the majority of them, if not all, implicitly or explicitly accept that consumption is a core factor of economic development. The provision of basic necessities improves the quality of human life. Consumption

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[34] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen *The World of Consumption*, pp 302-302

[35] F List *Werk*, vol. vi (1930 and 1970) pp 106-107, English Translation, pp. 54-55, quoted in Henderson, W O *Friedrich List Economist and Visionary 1789-1846*, p 173

contributes to the development of human capital, and human capital to higher productivity and economic growth. It is a roundabout process, not a direct or linear one.

Consumption patterns in every society change along the time path. 'With a few temporary deviations, all societies are advancing naturally and consistently 'up', on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism, and ignorance to riches, civilisation, democracy and rationality, the highest expression of which is science '[36] In the private sphere individuals wish not to live as their parents did, but more comfortably and conveniently.[37] Consumption is unalienated and is perhaps the most important partner of the ascendancy of human civilisation to a higher level. The modern world's consumption is a historical artefact and its present-day characteristics are the result of several centuries of profound social, economic, and cultural changes in the west.[38] It was the cause and consequence of so many social changes that its emergence marked nothing less than the transformation of the western world.[39]

The economic efficiency of a country is measured by its ability to satisfy consumers' desires.[40] Economic development brings a greater advance in material wellbeing and a more sweeping change in way of life.[41] The orthodox economics paradigm takes the goal of development to be material prosperity in the sense of high mass consumption.[42] Modern economic development in general has meant an unprecedented advance for most of the population in food, clothing, shelter, household furnishings, health, education, and recreational services [43] A higher level of consumption is one of the principal goals in a modern society, not only as an end in itself, but also an a means of furthering general economic prosperity [44]

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[36] Shanin, Teodor 'The Idea of Progress', p 65

[37] Kataro Tsujimura and Gottfried Frensil 'Consumption', p 191

[38] Ringer, Fritz K 'Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning', p 4

[39] McCracken, Grant *Culture & Consumption*, p 3

[40] Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*, p 106

[41] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol 4, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, p 395

[42] Wilber, C K and Jameson, K P 'Paradigm of Economic Development and Beyond', in C K Wilber and K P Jameson (eds), *Direction in Economic Development*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1979, cited in Dutt, Amitava Krishna 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', pp 8-9

[43] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', p 399

[44] Kataro Tsujimura and Gottfried Frensil 'Consumption' p 191

A change in the proportional importance of consumer articles in a society is an indicator of the transformation of economic structure. A rise in the proportionate importance of new or modern goods relative to that of traditional items of consumption reflects technological progress in the consumption sphere.[45] In the early phase of modern economic development, growth takes the form of food, clothing and shelter; at a more advanced phase much of the change is connected with the motor car and the way of the life associated with it[46] Now highly advanced articles and services such as computers, internet and satellite communication equipment have become necessary items of the consumer basket. Rostow identifies his fifth stage of economic growth as the age of high mass consumption.[47] An affluent society, as generally understood, is one in which every one's material wants are easily satisfied[48]

The line used to be drawn to divide the poor and not-poor on the basis of whether a person could afford anything beyond the necessities of existence[49] Poverty can be defined as the failure to meet a certain level of consumption of such necessary commodities as food, clothing, shelter and education.[50] Economists interpret necessities as goods and services for which consumer demand either does not rise along with income or rises in lesser proportion to rising income.[51] The relationship between change in income and demand for necessities is called the alteration of the household consumption pattern, which has a theoretical connotation with Engels' law of consumption.[52] Engels' law has established that, as total consumption increases, the percentage of expenditure going to food (food rate) tends to decrease.[53] Engels' law is one of the best established regularities in economic Behaviour.[54] It is also the first empirical law of consumption in

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[45] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', p 399

[46] ibid , p 399

[47] Rostow, W W *The Stages of Economic Growth A Non-communist Manifesto,* pp 10-11, 73-92

[48] Sahlins, Marshall 'The Original Affluent Society', p 4

[49] Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction,* p 107

[50] Dutt, Amitava Krishna 'Two Issues in the State of Development Economics', p 24.

[51] Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction,* p 107

[52] Ho, Samuel P S *Economic Development of Taiwan, 1860-1970,* p 226

[53] Reid, Margaret G 'Consumers', in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences,* vol ?, The p 335

[54] Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and*

the history of economic statistics.[55] 'It seems probable that among countries the food rate is a suitable proxy for total consumption: the lower this rate, the higher the total consumption.'[56] However, this law and the theory built around it may not apply to all parts of the income distribution in all periods [57]

Unlike necessities, the demand for luxuries rises either in proportion to income or in a greater proportion to income. This means that the income elasticity of demand is inelastic for necessities and elastic for luxuries.[58] However, the dividing line between '. .necessities and luxuries turns out to be not objective and immutable, but socially determined and ever changing, very differently drawn in different societies, by different people. One cannot unequivocally separate commodities according to whether consumers' demand for them is elastic or inelastic.'[59] It is impossible to make a distinction between necessities and not necessities; it is not as clear-cut and unambiguous as it first seems; a smoker's demand for cigarettes is no less inelastic than his demand for food [60]

A person's success in a modern society is measured in terms of how well he or she is doing as a consumer; consumption is not just a means of fulfilling needs, but permeates one's social relation, perception and image [61] In the race of insatiable wants every rational individual wants something extra to what he or she already has. The overwhelming majority of the world population always likes a little more, often a lot more, income and possessions.[62] Since ascetics are rare breeds in modern societies, 'Development often means simply 'more' in a set of groups which are located on a scale in terms of quantity of possessions, and which are all seeking more, those groups at the top end of the scale have only the void

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Consumer Dissatisfaction, p 183

55 Kataro Tsujimura and Gottfried Frensil 'Consumption' in *Marxism, Communism and Western Society A Comparative Encyclopaedia*, vol II, p 191

56 Reid, Margaret G 'Consumers', in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. p 336

57 Shamms, Carole *The Pre-industrial consumer in England and America from 1500 to 1800*, p 123

58 Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*, p 107

59 ibid , p 108

60 ibid , p 107

61 Gabriel, Yiannis and Lang, Tim *The Unmanageable Consumer Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentations*, p 1

62 Rees, Albert 'Economics', in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol 4, p 472

before them, whereas groups who are at the bottom are bounded by groups above them So while some may face the uncharted prospects of seeming endless, others are clearly facing primarily the more manageable project of 'catching up' with those who already have more '[63] Every one's final goal is endless consumption It is said that 'Consumption is a double tragedy What begins in inadequacy will end in deprivation Bringing together in international division of labour, the market makes available a dazzling array of products all these good things within a man's reach, but never all within his grasp Worse, in this game of consumer free society, every acquisition is simultaneously a deprivation, for every purchase of something is foregoing of something else, in general other marginally less desirable, and in some particular more desirable, that could have been instead '[64]

Per capita income is taken as an approximate indicator for determining economic development Countries are compared with one another on the basis of their per capita income, which appears to be the major determinant of the level of consumption [65] The rise in consumer expenditure bears a close relationship to the rise in income [66] But the standard of living of a country depends, not on its per capita income, but on its per capita consumption [67] A income-based yardstick is not the most likely to represent the poverty of a society and a proper yardstick must represent the level of consumption, which represents only income in kind, important interspatial differences in prices and other conditions that affect the cost of living, such as climate [68] To determine the overall severity of poverty in a single index, one needs to measure the minimum standard of living, the consumption based poverty line is then established [69] The minimal biological standard is, however, not easily applied to all the necessities There are no minimum biological standards for clothing, housing, heating, lighting, kitchen and bathroom facilities [70]

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[63] Wallerstein, I 'Development Lodestar or Illusion' , p 5

[64] Sahlins, Marshall 'The Original Affluent Society', p 6

[65] Kataro Tsujimura and Gottfried Frensil 'Consumption', in *Marxism, Communism and Western Society A Comparative Encyclopaedia* vol II, p 191

[66] Open University, *Statistical Sources*, Unit 8 Consumption, p 35

[67] Myint, H *The Economics of Developing Countries*, p 8

[68] Reid, Margaret G 'Consumers', *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol 3, p 340

[69] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development* p 9

[70] Scitovsky, Tibor *The Joyless Economy An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction* p 107

In our analysis we relate economic development to consumption. The expansion of consumption standards, both vertically and horizontally, is the striking feature of economic development. The vertical expansion of consumption standards is involved with what economists widely term economic growth and the horizontal expansion is related to the distribution of prosperity among the general mass of the people. Popularly known growth plus development indicators are no more than the shadows of the average consumption standards.(if we turn a blind eye to the psychological, social and environmental problems) In economically backward countries, average consumption standards are lower than those of developed countries and so are the shadows behind them

The main thrust of current economic development efforts in these countries is to achieve or come closer to the consumption standards of developed countries. The dividing line between consumption and investment is always an arbitrary one.[71] Consumption is the major contributor to the human development of a nation. Modern economic development in general has meant an unprecedented advance for most of the population in food, clothing, shelter, household furnishings, and health, education, and recreational services - to the extent that dire conditions such as malnutrition have virtually been eliminated.[72] An increase in the consumption of basic needs is a form of investment with high returns in poor countries.[73]

The standard growth and development models imply that steadily rising consumption will accompany economic development.[74] For Griffin, human development is instrumental in long-run economic growth, there is a complementarily between human and physical capital. The economic development strategies of the 1990s concentrated on accelerated economic growth, human capital development, reduction of poverty and restraining the deterioration of natural environment.[75] 'To express the overall severity of poverty in a single measure of index, we need to measure the standard of

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[71] Open University, *Statistical Sources*, Unit 8 Consumption, p 7

[72] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol 4, p 399

[73] Dasgupta, Partha *An Inquiry into Well-being and Destitution*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, p 249

[74] Horowitz Andrew W 'Optimal Patterns of Consumption and Development Expenditure in the Presence of Productivity Thresholds' *International Economic Review* ,Vol 34, No 1, February 1993, p 193

[75] Griffin, Keith 'Suggestions for an International Development Strategy for the 1990s', in Amitava Krisna Dut and Kenneth P Jameson (ed), *New Descriptions in Development Economics*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Hants, 1992, pp 163-178

living and determine what is a minimal standard of living A consumption-based poverty line is then established '[76]

3.2 Changes in Consumption Pattern and Underdevelopment: *an alternative approach*

3.2.1 Introductory Remarks

No country in the world had achieved economic development in the modern sense at the beginning of European colonialism The economic structures of the individual nations as well as of the entire world were transformed during the long colonial period Technological progress, production, exchange and consumption patterns were important elements of this transformation process The changes brought about in international production and exchange during this period are now known as the international division (or specialisation) of labour

We suggest that the general living conditions of the colonies improved under colonial rule This was a result of the general improvement in the living standards of every part of the world during the period rather than a declared colonial policy in this direction In our analysis we further propose that the changes in consumption patterns under colonial rule improved the living standards in these territories It was, however, sufficient only to bring these territories from the undeveloped to the underdeveloped state But the same consumption patterns froze these territories in their underdeveloped state The existing consumption theories do not explain changes brought about in the composition of consumer goods over time and space Neither do these theories examine the long-term economic impact of the changes in consumer goods Ben Fine and Leopold maintain that most of the current consumption theories are essentially static The basket of consumer articles under review is given, although the composition of the basket varies from one historical period to another The current theories do not sufficiently explain the mechanism of the introduction of new commodities and the disappearance and transformation of old ones [77] In our analysis we examine the long-term impact of the changes in the composition of consumer goods in a country

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[76] Meier, Gerald M *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, p 9

[77] Fine, Ben and Leopold, Ellen *The World of Consumption*, p 23

3.2.2 The Pre-capitalist subsistence economy: *undeveloped economy*

Although there were considerable differences among individual countries, we may say in general that the currently underdeveloped countries had predominantly subsistence economies before the Europeans extended their influence to them.[78] The limited needs of the inhabitants of these societies were procured by themselves mostly on a co-operative basis from the social units/groupings such as clans or the inhabitants of one neighbourhood, and they mainly consumed what they produced. It was not the individual, but the household/family which was the basic economic unit that made economic decisions. Everyone in the society was basically a tiller or a stock-keeper, although certain economic functions were performed by castes or guilds.[79] However, none of this primitive division of labour was sufficient to bring about structural changes in the subsistence economy. In addition to foods and beverages, they usually made their own houses, clothing, furniture, lighting fuels, washing substances, pottery and implements. They had their own amusements, education, communications and healing methods.

Among colonies there were economically flourishing centres as well as highly backward territories. Some authors maintain that there were dynamic nations among these nations, although these were not confined to the classical examples of India, China or Egypt, but included some other territories too. 'When the Europeans first penetrated to Africa, they encountered a medley of civilizations which were in no sense stagnant. In West Africa, there was a vigorous trans-Saharan trade, an exchange of scholars with North Africa, a gradual expansion of some centralised

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[78] Economic diversity was common even in different localities in the same country. Some localities in certain countries and some areas in certain regions had advanced production, distribution and consumption networks. There were also highly backward countries, regions and localities. For the sake of convenience we have assumed that all countries and regions had subsistence economies.

[79] Two kinds of guilds are broadly referred to in history as craft guilds and merchant guilds. The former were involved with production and the latter with distribution. References are made to craft guilds in the Roman empire and the most widely known European guilds had their roots in the 10th and 11th centuries. In Marxian analysis; the two main instigators of the transformation of European societies from feudalism to capitalism were the growth of craft guilds in feudal towns and the growth of overseas trade (merchant guilds). The caste system in its most developed form is found in India and it has its roots in distant antiquity. The caste members have a special social rank defined generally by descent, marriage and occupation.

political systems, such as the Ashanti kingdom, and the extension of economic ties among previously disparate peoples.'[80] There was long-distance trading in cattle, donkeys, leather, textile, salt, kola nuts and gold in the pre-Colonial period in sub-Saharan and west Africa.[81] Some countries and some regions in certain countries had a fairly good living standard in pre-colonial times which was even better than that of the colonisers. 'At the outset the gap between the standard of living in Europe and the colonies, at least in Asia, was of the order of 1 to 1.5, in so far as such an evaluation has any meaning. With imperialism and the effects of the Industrial Revolution deterioration set in, hitting the colonised people very hard. ... the gap in the standard of living went from 1.9 to 1.0 in 1860, to 3.4 in 1914 and 5.2 in 1952.'[82]

The political expression of the pre-colonial societies was broadly despotism. The freedom of life and social mobility was restricted by many rules and regulations and also by social traditions. In such societies, even in a strictly abstract model, production and consumption were subject to the arbitrary and dictatorial power of rulers and their subordinate officials.[83] The economic surplus was normally consumed by aristocratic elements - monarchs, lords, nobles and also charities. As a rule, only the aristocrats, nobles and their family members could consume articles beyond the essentials of life: the luxuries.

In these societies, each ordinary household had to be satisfied with limited material wants. A few needs which were not forthcoming within its immediate vicinity were furnished from the outside world through a limited trade which was mostly carried on by the barter system. This trade was either limited to very essential items such as salt or light luxury articles for aristocrats and nobles.[84] The extremely limited distant trade was restricted

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[80] Mittelman, James H. *Out from Underdevelopment: Prospects for the Third World*, p. 43.

[81] de Han, Leo et al 'Cross-border Cattle Marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1900: Geographical Patterns and Government Induced Change' Unpublished manuscripts.

[82] Ferro, Marc. *Colonisation: A Global History,*(trans. K. D. Prithipaul), Routledge, London, 1997,
p. 17; makes reference to Bairoch, P. 'Le bilan économique du colonialisme', in L. Blussé et al (eds.) *History and Underdevelopment,* Leiden University Centre for the History of European Expansion, Leiden, 1980, pp. 29-42.

[83] The term ' satisfaction' is applied here in place of 'utility' in the consumption theories of economics. We feel that utility is too technical and sophisticated to apply to old, non-individualistic societies.

[84] The largest articles involved in trade were animals such as elephants, horses and oxen. Elephants had been exported to India from Ceylon since ancient times and

to light luxuries or animals such as cattle, horses and elephants. The core pillars of the modern economies- division of labour, specialisation, and exchange were not very apparent. The economies were fundamentally in an undeveloped state and no autonomous forces were in operation within the system itself to facilitate a radical departure from the orbit where social, economic, political and environmental forces were in a delicate balance. Here we deliberately ignore the impact of temporary phenomena such as marked climatic vagaries, epidemics, wars and civil strife. Under the colonial occupation the traditional societies became disintegrated, subsistence economies were replaced by market economies and western values were incorporated.[85]

3.2.3 Transformation Process:*development or underdevelopment?*

The historical evidence suggests that the transformation of an economy from a lower order to a higher order could be attributable to a number of forces. These forces could be generated within a society itself or from pioneering societies through contact or direct intervention. In our investigation we emphasise direct intervention by the external force or the colonial power.[86]

There were a number of objectives on the agenda of the European discoveries and colonisation which began in the 15th century. Religious zeal, love of adventure, revenge by conquest would be included, but economic interest or thirst for wealth was the main driving force of these exercises.[87] European interventions greatly transformed the centuries-old socio-economic set-up in colonies. The effects ranged from simple individual freedom to modern democratic governments in the political sphere, and from the simple needs of the old subsistence economy to the complex needs in the international economy.

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survived well into the British period. Horses were brought to Ceylon from (via) India.

[85] Goldsmith, Edward. 'Development as Colonialism', in Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (eds.) *The Case Against the Global Economy*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1996, p. 255.

[86] It is generally recognised that European colonialism started around 1500 AD after the Europeans' discovery of sea routes to distant territories of the world in search of wealth from gold, ivory, spices and slaves. The first three centuries could be regarded as the period of old colonialism which relied on commercial ventures. Commercial colonialism was replaced by industrial colonialism in the second half of the 18th century.

[87] Ferro, Marc. *Colonisation: A Global History*, pp. 6-7, 15.

The colonial transformation thrust emanated from many sources rather than one and all of them individually and collectively had to fulfil a historical mission in the transformation process. The long list would include expansion of trade and commerce, monetization accompanied by modern financial institutions; the introduction of plantation agriculture/large-scale estates or grazing and mining, modern communications such as roads, canals, railways, harbours and telegraphs, the dismantling of feudal social bonds and the introduction of new legal systems and institutions; modern education and Christianity.[88]

> 'European conquerors brought modern communication, transportation, health care, and education to the lands they conquered. This improvements made the new lands more comfortable for the foreigners who came to live, made the land more productive, made it easier to get goods to market, and created a small, educated native middle class to assist the foreigners. But essentially, improvements were intended to benefit local people only to the extent that they made them more useful.'[89]

In many colonies, the old subsistence agriculture was transformed into plantation agriculture. The native lost his lands to the plantation and became a labourer in the plantations or related modern service sectors. For example, from the 16th century, the Spanish colonialists created *haciendas* or large estates from the lands which had been predominantly communal properties of native communities in Latin America.[90]

> 'The fertile valleys or coastal lowlands, cultivated during the pre-colonial civilisations by the indigenous groups, were transformed into large estates belonging to the conquerors and their heirs. In some areas they were used for pastures, elsewhere for plantation agriculture.'[91]

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[88] None of these may have directly been designed to improve the living standards of the natives in the colonies, but to benefit the colonisers themselves. Over time, local pressure groups came to demand more native-friendly socio-economic policies in addition to agitating for political independence. Some colonial officials who were either in the colonies or in the colonial administration in the mother countries shared similar opinions. However, these seem to have had only a little impact on the main currents of the colonial administrations. It is somewhat similar to what current underdeveloped countries are unsuccessfully demanding with the help of some organisations in developed countries for a fair share from the modern world economy.

[89] Roberts, John G. *The Colonial Conquest in Asia*, An Impact Book, London, 1976, p. 2.

[90] Huizer, Gerrit. *Peasant Movements and their Counterforces in South-East Asia*, Marwah Publications, New Delhi, 1980, p. 2.

[91] Huizer, Gerrit. *Peasant Rebellion in Latin America*, Penguin Books Ltd.,

European colonisation was unlike the colonisation of other nations previous to them, although their first waves was similar to the previous types of colonisation of Turks, Arabs and Romans. In this early colonial period the economic, military and technological gap between the colonised and colonisers was a narrow one and trade was on a very small scale, but the industrial revolution altered the entire set-up on a large scale.[92]

How much the natives' living conditions improved during the colonial period is a controversial issue. Referring to Ceylon, Mills says 'Throughout the nineteenth century the British Government conscientiously tried to improve the condition of people, and to hold the balance even between the conflicting interests of the planters, the native aristocracy and priesthood, and the raiyats.'[93] Gingham maintains that hardly any money was spent by the British on colonial welfare and development until after the Second World War.[94] It is also maintained that the concept of social development emerged from the activities of colonial welfare administrators in Africa during the 1940s and 1950s.[95] There were both positive and negative items on the colonial score card and the net score after adding the pluses and minuses varied widely between countries.[96]

> 'We cannot say just how much difference colonisation made ... colonialism is only one of the many political, social and environmental factors which determine the rate of development. It cannot carry the whole weight of explaining why some countries did better than others, and its importance varies widely from one territory to another. With or without colonialism, modernization, being a slow process, was bound to have taken a considerable time.'[97]

Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 7.

92 Ferro, Marc. *Colonisation: A Global History*, 1997, p. 17.

93 Mills, Lennox A. *Ceylon Under British Rule, 1795-1932. With an Account of the East India Company's Embassies to Kandy 1762-1795*, Oxford University Press, London, 1933, p. 121.

94 Ingham, Barbara. *Economics and Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, London, 1995, p. 4.

95 Midgley, James. *Social Development: The Developmental Perspective in Social Welfare*, 1995, p. 52

96 Reynold Lloyd. 'The Spread of Economic Growth to The Third World: 1850-1980', pp. 956-58; quoted in Gerald M. Meier, *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, , p. 63.

97 Lewis, A. Growth and Fluctuation, 1870-1913, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1978, p. 211; quotes in Ingham, Barbara. *Economics and Development*, p. 7.

Overall, the long-term colonial transformation brought permanent structural changes to the centuries-old traditional economies. The societies shifted away from their original equilibrium to a new equilibrium. In all cases of colonisation, pre-capitalist economies changed dramatically; indigenous skills were substantially eliminated; cash crops were introduced, often replacing food crops and consequently altering diet habits.[98] Among the forces in operation under the colonial transformation process two were particularly important. They were internal economic integration and the incorporation of the domestic economy into the world economy.

3.2.4 Internal economic integration: *from local to national*

Colonies experienced strong internal economic integration or economic consolidation during the transformation process, which brought profound changes to pre-colonial subsistence economies. As a result, different regions, provinces, villages and all kinds of human settlements within colonies developed an interdependent relationship, losing their old natural, economic and social barriers. This could be regarded as an economic extension within a centuries-old political unit. The price mechanism made its entrance and the markets started to expand and gain sophistication. The economic impact which a country can realise through internal integration is conditioned, among other things, by the extent and diversity of its human and natural resource endowment. However, the internal integration forces were not symmetrically dispersed. The economic, administrative or military focal points received a much greater influence than the rest of the country.[99] Internal integration is one of the vital factors in economic growth. Economic growth might even occur within certain parts or units of a country, but the most significant unit is the nation state. 'Some degree of national unification, of continuity of government, of external peace and internal order seems necessary before growth can begin. Further, economic interaction is more intense within national boundaries than across them. ... We should add that "nation" is intended to include colonies, which meet the condition of unified political control and administration.'[100]

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[98] Mittelman, James H *Out from Underdevelopment: Prospects for the Third World*, pp. 43-44

[99] The Japanese economy experienced marked internal consolidation during the self-enforced isolated Tokugawa period. It was greatly beneficial to international integration during Meiji period

[100] Reynolds, Lloyd G. 'The Spread of Economic Growth to the Third World. 1850-

3.2.5 External integration: *from national to international*

In parallel with internal consolidation, colonies were integrated into the world economy This could be considered as a marked economic extension beyond the centuries-old political boundaries or perhaps beyond the limited regional commercial intercourse. Streams of tools and machinery, raw materials, consumer articles, capital, labour, technology, social and cultural milieu began to flow in and out.

> 'Invasions have fostered commerce, exchange of knowledge, adoptions of better methods of production, the blending of different cultures and beliefs and other benefits Invasions have also disrupted life in conquered countries, debased culture, and even destroyed civilization '[101]

External integration was dominated by the colonisers and the colonies began to export primary goods and to import finished goods and machinery

> 'For centuries production and consumption had been in harmony but not unchanging Subject to the pre-capitalist class structures and the limitation of their resource development, local peoples produced what they consumed and consumed what they produced With the injection of imperialism, however, production and consumption were disjoined Hence nowadays local people largely produce what they do not consume and consume what they do not produce '[102]

The consequences of external integration were more far-reaching than those of internal integration. In a transitional society; the individual gained a considerable personal freedom from the removal of mediaeval social fetters Some of them exploited the expanding economic horizon created by the transformation process

3.3 Changes in Consumption Pattern: *transformation of consumption*

The changes in consumption pattern is an integral part of the transformation process. Consumption Behaviour, when defined broadly, is

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1980', p 944

[101] Roberts, John G *The Colonial Conquest in Asia*, p 1

[102] Mittelman, James H *Out from Underdevelopment Prospects for the Third World*, p 44

the most flexible human Behaviour of any society. Production methods, social attitudes, cultural values are not flexible as consumption. The social value system always seems to lag behind the changes in consumption in the transformation process. In a transitional society, compared with old feudal societies, avenues are opened to consumer freedom. New consumer articles, as well as new varieties of familiar articles, become easily accessible to the consumer.

Actual consumption is not merely decided by the consumer freedom and taste, but by the distribution of income. At the initial stages of a transitional economy, income is predominantly in kind and the distribution is in favour of the old aristocratic elements. They are the hereditary owners of income sources such as land or cattle. When the transformation forces start to expand, money begins to play an important role. Some of the major income sources begin to transfer from the hereditary classes to new groups of innovative and risk-taking individuals engaged in modern economic activities or working for the colonial administrations. The old aristocratic elements and the emerging native upper classes are the consumer leaders in the transitional period.

The small producers, the overwhelming majority of these societies, continue to make their traditional products partly for their own consumption and partly for exchange for other goods. Some of them fully or partly convert to the production of money crops and now depend on the market for their necessities such as foods and clothing. While some others begin to work in the modern sector for money wages. Now each and every one has some means or other to engage in the market mechanism. The old subsistence economy is no longer valid. Consumption begins to turn away from mostly local articles to regional, national and global articles. Now the quantity, quality, variety and security of supply of consumer articles are much improved compared with the old subsistence economy.

3.3.1 The Consumption Pattern: *a new meaning*

The broader meaning of consumption covers the utilisation of consumer goods for the satisfaction of human wants and the using up of resources in production. This requires a further refinement, since conceptually 'consumption' delivers a specific meaning according to the scope of a particular discipline. Etymologically, a consumption pattern may be habits, manner, modes, ways, orders, schemes, methods or procedures of utilisation of resources or consumer goods. It is related to human Behaviour

either individually or collectively. Nevertheless, it is necessary for our purposes to give a precise meaning to the concept of 'changes in consumption pattern'. In our analysis we define consumption patterns as the alteration of consumption habits, goals and motives affecting the long-term economic progress of a nation. This differs from the gratification of consumer wants at a given point of time, subject to price and income. It essentially covers a longer period where structural changes in consumption habits as well as their economic, social and environmental results become visible.

3.3.2 Major Aspects of Changes in Consumption Pattern:[103] *diversity in homogeneity*

We conceive that there are directly and distantly related aspects of changing consumption patterns. The 'consumption creation' and the 'consumption diversion' are direct aspects and can be incorporated into the aggregate demand analysis. In addition, there are two distantly related, major aspects which affect the economic progress of a country. We call them 'exhaustive consumption' and 'destructive consumption.' The reader might feel that the former could easily be incorporated into environmental studies and the latter partly into economic studies and partly into ethical studies [104]

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[103] Not only the private sector, but central and local government share a portion of consumption through their recurrent expenditure Public expenditure was not considered to be important in traditional economic analysis It was given a prominent place only after the Keynesian revolution In modern economies the importance of public expenditure as a whole is again being reduced to what it was in the pre-Keynesian periods In the light of all this it would be more practical to omit public consumption expenditure from our analysis

[104] For convenience' sake we grouped the changing consumption patterns into four aspects, but this does not mean that our dividing lines are clear-cut and that crossing boundaries is impossible To take the example of narcotics, say opium, in our categorisation, this is obviously part of disturbing consumption It could also be a creation of consumption if it was a newly introduced consumer article If it began to be produced within a country after being imported for some time, it would be a diversion of consumption If the cultivation creates/reduces environmental problems, it becomes exhaustive consumption as well

3.3.3 Consumption creation: [105] *generating new tastes*

We define the introduction of new goods to the consumer as consumption creation The new good would be either a completely novel consumer article or a characteristically modified old consumer article.[106] As a result of the introduction of a new good, a new demand is created, new expenditure and income flows are generated, old products are affected and the consumer's preference list is rearranged. The orthodox demand theory is incapable of evaluating the effects of the introduction of new consumer articles.

> 'As an explanation of phenomena the "orthodox" theory of demand is fairly useful in a good many connections. But when we consider the growth in sales of new products the theory seems to give no help at all .. products like washing machines and mechanical refrigerators show a development which can hardly be explained by variations in price or income or by autonomous changes in taste '[107]

The formal theory of consumer preference in mainstream economics provides no accommodation for learning by consuming. The consumer tends to be inefficient in choice and in use when a new product is introduced. As time passes the consumer learns and consumption efficiency rises.[108]

When the consumer market is defined as disintegrated in different territories of the world, innovation and international trade are the possible major vehicles for bringing new goods to the consumer. When the whole world consumer market is taken as a fully integrated single unit, innovation may be the only source of the introduction of new goods. In economics, 'innovation' is considered to be the main, if not the only, source for introducing new goods to the consumer and the effect of innovation on the economy is analysed exclusively on the supply side through the production function. Contrary to this longstanding tradition, the effects of innovation

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[105] We adapted the ' consumption' creation' and ' consumption diversion' from 'trade creation' and 'trade diversion' of Jacob Viner, see Viner, J *The Customs Union Issue*, Stevens & Sons Limited, London, 1950, pp 41-81

[106] For example, in Ceylon, the introduction of kerosene oil for vegetable oil as a lighting fuel is a completely novel good, while the introduction of cane sugar for jaggery (traditional coarse sugar) is a drastic modification of the old goods

[107] Duesenberry, James S *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, p. 104

[108] James, Jeffrey *Consumption and Development*, pp 26-27

are now examined in relation to the utility function: the implications of innovations in consumption for growth and inflation.[109] Scientific discoveries and new technology stand out not only as the main factors bringing about changes in consumption, but also creating greater efficiency of production, higher real income, and changes in the relative cost of various products.[110] In the modern world new products which modify the existing way of life regularly emerge in the course of technical progress, and often they become necessities of life.[111] Duesenberry identifies two kinds of new products: those which provide facilities for a 'new range of activities', and those which provide facilities for ' improved ways of doing old things.' The improved ways could either increase or decrease expenditure. Improved transport, for example, made possible a wider range of recreational activities and improved the comfort of transport. New household appliances essentially substitute for maids and reduce household costs.[112] Kindleberger identifies two types of innovations as 'new goods' and 'new ways to produce old goods' and points out that the distinction between these two is a loose one. 'To the extent that inventions take place in new goods - particularly consumption items - invention is the mother of necessity.'[113] Referring to the use of modern consumer articles such as radios, motorcycles, bicycles Freedman says;

> 'The adoption of new ways in consumption is a more palatable form of change - one which brings its own sources of gratification. Since any change from traditional ways will make subsequent changes a little easier to accept, modern consumption may raise the transition to modern ways in production. The purchase and use of these modern consumer durables involves contact with the more modern sectors of society, and the acquisition of new modes of behaviour.'[114]

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109 See, for example Swann, Peter G. M. 'Innovation in Consumption and Economic Growth', in Jonathan Michie and John Grieve Smith (eds.) *Globalization, Growth, and Governance: Creating an Innovative Economy,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1998.

110 Reid, Margaret G. 'Consumers', *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences,* vol. iii, p. 340

111 Nurkese, R. *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries,* pp. 61-62; quoted in James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Development,* p. 113.

112 Duesenberry, James S. *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour,* pp. 58-59.

113 Kindleberger, Charles P. *Economic Development,* McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1965, p. 140.

114 Freedman, Debora S. 'The Role of the Consumption of Modern Durables in Economic Development', *Economic Development and Cultural Change.* vol. 19, no. 1,

One of the important outcomes of the industrial revolution and its aftermath of scientific and technological progress was the acceleration of the introduction of new consumer goods. Not only new goods, but new models, were continually flowing out. The introduction of new goods or changing the character of old goods is a never ending enterprise in the modern world. The life span of a model is becoming shorter and shorter. Many new goods are produced each year and many more 'old' products are changed in a significant respect.[115]

The introduction of new goods was a rare occurrence in the early colonial period, as it was in the old world. In the old world new consumer articles came mainly through internal or international trade rather than through the blessings of innovation as in the post-industrialised world. Trade, especially distant trade, was essentially confined to light luxuries or essential consumer articles. The luxuries were at the top of the commodity pyramid while the essentials were at the bottom, and the composition of trade was a mirror image of the old social pyramid. There was always a large vacuum between essentials and luxuries. What happened after the industrial revolution was a growth in the non-essential and non-luxury category of consumer articles.[116] This has swollen further since the introduction of the mass consumer article philosophy in the early 20th century. In the pre-capitalist world, consumption had been stratified according to the social stratification and there was no consumer freedom.[117] There was no trickling

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October 1970, p. 26.

[115] James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Development*, p. 15.

[116] We call intermediate consumer goods those that do not belong either to the luxury or the essential category. The term 'mass consumer goods' is used to refer to this kind of goods in modern analyses. However, mass consumer goods are mainly factory made and have their roots in the industrial revolution. The intermediate consumer goods category is broader than the mass consumer goods which comprises factory made as well as non-factory made goods. The latter have a much longer history, which predates the industrial revolution.

[117] For example, Blanchard makes the following comment on English society. 'For more than a quarter of millennium before 1850 the English peasantry conformed to an ordered and highly structured pattern of consumption. Each family in village society adhered to an ordered value system of finely graded dependence which determined its position of superiority or inferiority in relation to its fellows, independently of its participation in particular forms of social organisation.' see: Blanchard, Ian. 'English Peasant Consumption. The End of an Epoch, 1580-1680' in H. Baudet and M. Bogucka (org.), *Types of Consumption, Traditional and Modern*, Académia Kiadó, Budapest, 1982, p. 1 In this English society 'None ought to use or wear any inordinate or excessive apparel, but only according to their degrees.' *Statutes of the Realm*, 3 Edward IV c.5 (1463), quoted ibid. p. 1.

down of luxuries and new consumer articles from the top to the bottom in pre-capitalist societies as there is in the capitalist system. Such a mechanism was neither socially acceptable nor economically justifiable in the restrictive old world.

At the beginning of colonialism, a high proportion of new consumer articles entered the world market from the colonies. The skills of the centuries-old traditional craftsmanship in the colonies and exotic tropical products were the major sources of supply. Over time, the Europeans began to produce some of these products which they had imported earlier.

The industrial revolution was a turning point in this process and, since then, the colonisers have been able to produce many new consumer articles as well as some of those previously imported from colonies. In many instances, production exceeded the local requirements and the excess was exported to the colonies. One objective of the colonialism was to use the colonies as a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in the mother countries.[118] The possession of a controlled market in the colonies was expected to prove advantageous as an outlet for low-grade commodities not in demand, at profitable prices, in a highly competitive foreign market [119]

One of the most important ways in which developed countries have changed underdeveloped countries through the introduction of new products; is that these have changed consumption, production patterns and culture and society [120] The unlimited introduction of new consumer goods has created problems universally, but these are more severe in the developing countries. 'With each new invention or innovation it becomes possible to awaken and satisfy an appetite latent in the human constitution. What if all the wrong needs are awakened?'[121] The new goods came to the colonies accompanied by new cultural values. The impact of colonialism on urban consumption patterns in northern Rhodesia seems quite remarkable. The urban communities followed the prestige scale introduced by the Europeans. The 'success in achieving this "civilized" way of life is demonstrated conspicuously by the physical appurtenances of living. The

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[118] Cecil Rhodes· English Businessman and Colonist, Quoted in Goldsmith, Edward 'Development as Colonialism', p 254; The author does not state the original source

[119] Knorr, Klaus E *British Colonial Theories, 1570-1850*, The University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1944, p 59

[120] James, Jeffrey *Consumption and Development*, p 15, For an interesting discussion on the welfare effects of the introduction of new products to the developing countries by the developed countries with eight case studies see ibid pp 15 -42

[121] Langdon, Winner *Autonomous Technology*, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass 1977, p 31, quoted in Tilman, Rick *Thorstein Veblen and His Critics, 1891-1963 Conservative, Liberal and Radical Perspectives*, p 193

most important of these is clothes, but personal jewellery (especially wrist-watches), furniture and European type foodstuffs are also important.'[122]

Not only new consumer articles, but new consumers were moving during the colonial period. New consumers migrated with new consumer culture(s). Indentured labourers, slaves and Europeans constituted important human flows during the colonial period. Nevertheless, in colonies, as a rule, the European consumption culture was considered to be superior to the native culture. It was the mainstream of the consumption philosophy to be followed by the native who aspired to climb the colonial social ladder. The culture was first adopted by the local elites, urban settlers, middle class people. It was regarded as an ideal to be followed by the ordinary natives. The relative income hypothesis proposes that the low income category tries to emulate high income consumers.[123] The social and economic freedom granted by the colonial transformation process was a bonus for the ordinary masses to witness the taste of new consumer culture.[124] The colonial legacy passed smoothly into the post-colonial period. In underdeveloped countries the rich indulge in conspicuous consumption and there is also a clamour for higher wages for consumption tempted by the consumption patterns of rich people.[125] Peebles airs similar opinions about Ceylon. 'Moreover, certain attitudes would retard development ... for example, the elite tended to invest only in land, politicians were unwilling to limit current consumption in order to accumulate investment capital, peasants resisted wage labour except in dire need, and consumers exhibited a passionate preference for imported goods.'[126]

The common nature of the human being is to follow the consumption patterns which are supposed to be superior to him. This Behaviour cuts across every stage of human civilisation. Referring to the Bushmen living in the Kalahari, Marshall says 'As the !Kung come into more contact with Europeans - and this is already happening - they will feel sharply the lack of our things and will need and want more. It makes them feel inferior to be without clothes when they stand among strangers who are clothed. But in

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122 Mitchell and Epstein, 1959, p.32; quoted in James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Development*, p. 124.

123 See Chapter One for Relative Income Hypothesis.

124 The old social and economic bonds in colonies were dismantled not for the benefits to the natives of the colonies, but for the benefit of the colonisers themselves. Reforms in this direction were essential for the creation of land, labour and commodity markets.

125 Chelliah, Raja J. *Fiscal Policy in Underdeveloped Countries*, p. 22.

126 Peebles, Patrick. *Sri Lanka: A Handbook of Historical Statistics*, p. 180.

their own life and with their own artefacts they were comparatively free from material pressure.'[127] 'Changes in African consumption patterns are graphically illustrate on the Kalahari. In less than three decades, the self-sufficient traditional way of life among Dobe Bushmen ... has been replaced by market-dependent consumption patterns.'[128] 'When people come into contact with superior goods or superior patterns of consumption, with new articles or new ways of meeting old wants, they are apt to feel after a while a certain restlessness and dissatisfaction. Their knowledge is extended, their imagination stimulated; new desires are aroused.'[129]

Some of the new goods may be luxuries at the early stages of their introduction to the consumer, but they ultimately turn into normal goods once they have become mass consumer articles; for example, tea, coffee, spices, and sugar are a few of them in the old world. One could speak in the same way of the gramophone, radios, refrigerators, television receivers, microwave ovens and computers in the recent past. Internet surfing, digital television channels and satellite telephones will belong to the same category in the near future. In the modern world new goods are constantly flowing at an accelerated rate as compared with the old world.[130] The new products have more high income characteristics, such as better quality, more uniform standards and more luxury.[131]

Freedman, while accepting the importance of saving and capital accumulation for economic development, proposes that the availability of modern consumer goods could have a positive effect on development.[132]

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[127] Marshall, Lorna. 'Sharing, Talking and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions among !Kung Bushmen', *Africa*, 31, 1961; quoted in Marshall Sahlins. 'The Original Affluent Society', p. 7.

[128] Belk, Russell W. 'Third World Consumer Culture', *Research and Marketing*, Supplement 4, JAI Press Inc, Greenwich, 1988, p. 113; makes reference to Lee, Richard B. *The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979 and Sahlins, Marshall, *Stone Age Economics*, Aldine, Atherton, Chicago, 1972.

[129] Nurkse, R. *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, p. 59; quoted in James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Development*, p. 112.

[130] In the modern world, however, when new kinds of goods or new models of goods appear on the market, the older goods or models are not always simultaneously available with the new ones. They are withdrawn from production at the discretion of industry. see: Mishan, E. J. *The Costs of Economic Growth*, p. 110.

[131] James, Jeffrey. *Consumption and Development*, pp. 20-21; makes reference to Stewart, F. *Technology and Underdevelopment*, Macmillan, 1977.

[132] Freedman, Debora S., 'The Role of Consumption of Modern Durables in Economic Development', p. 26; The article is based on part of the Ph.D. dissertation submitted to

Referring to the consumption of modern objects in Taiwan, he makes the following comment.

> 'The consumption of modern objects appears to make a positive contribution to economic development in Taiwan families who buy modern durables in Taiwan is inconsistent with the idea that such consumption not necessarily decreases savings and capital formation and thus, impedes development efforts.
>
> Instead, the family who are modern in consumption are characterised by a complex of characteristics, attitudes and behaviour which, on the whole, are likely to be beneficial to the development process '[133]

The introduction of new products to poor countries does not essentially increase the welfare of their societies. New articles could be either good products or notoriously bad ones. Products such as vaccination belong to the former category, while powdered baby milk and high tar cigarettes belong to the latter group.[134] Nevertheless, the evaluation of the impact of the introduction of new products is a difficult task; it connects with the question of what would have happened if the new products not been introduced [135]

In the short run, introduction of a new good would not essentially displace or encourage the consumption of goods which are already on the consumer's preference list. It may not essentially be a substitute or complementary to the existing consumer articles. Therefore, the cross elasticity between the new good and the goods which are already on the consumer's preference list would not deliver any reliable answer in this direction and same would apply to the income elasticity. Therefore, the degree of the necessity of a new good to the consumer cannot be determined at the early stages of its introduction, but, over time, the new good will find its due place on the consumers' preference list [136] There are special kinds of new good, such as a new medicine, which would form an exception to this generalisation. The calculation of the price and income elasticities of new goods is possible

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the University of Michigan by the author in 1967 The study was based on fieldwork carried out in Taiwan in 1962 and 1965 to examine the impact of modern consumer durable consumption on economic development

[133] ibid , p 47

[134] James, Jeffrey *Consumption and Development*, p 15.

[135] Duesenberry, James S *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*, p. 58

[136] Consumer goods are classified in economics as inferior, normal and superior/luxury goods on the basis of income elasticity of demand Inferior goods have negative income elasticities, while normal goods have low positive elasticities and superior/luxury goods have positive elasticities higher than unity

only in the long run and thereby the possibility of determining their degree of necessity to consumers [137] In general, the introduction of new goods would lead to a decline in the production of the existing goods.

> 'In many situations, the introduction of a new product either totally displaces existing products, or leads to altered production and cost conditions for them where the existing and new products compete in using the same (scarce) factor of production, and the production of new product raises costs of production of the old product . the vast array of new products (and technology) introduced over the past 200 years has raised the price of labour to producers of existing products, increasing their costs of production where there are economies of scale, and diseconomies of small scale, so that demand shifts away from the existing products to new products, costs of production of existing products rise '[138]

If the new demand creates pressure on local resources, it works as an instigator of economic growth Referring to the consumer demand for domestically produced goods, Kindleberger says it supports the economic development of a country.

> 'The appeal of new goods to the consumer has been a powerful factor in economic development New goods satisfy new wants, appetite grows with eating The demonstration effect in the domestic area operates as a stabilising influence to maintain expenditure and output With consumption growing continuously, it can be argued that economic development depends on consumers as much as or more than entrepreneurs '[139]

Duesenberry maintains that it is difficult to find much evidence to support the proposition that new products have created a 'strong upward trend in consumption' or that 'new goods reduced savings.'[140]

To return to the colonial period, technological advance occurred in the mother countries. Large-scale economies enabled them to ruin colonial handicrafts, even if we overlook their trade policies. The natives in the

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[137] The introduction of a new good induces the consumer to rearrange the pattern of his preferences The pre-rearranged period is considered here to be the short term and the post-rearranged period to be the long term A structural change in the preference list occurs only in the long term Demand analysis in microeconomics examines long-term consumer behavior, taking into account the changes in prices and incomes In the short run the consumer has not conformed to utility maximisation behavior

[138] James, Jeffrey Consumption *and Development,* 18-19

[139] Kindleberger, Charles P *Economic Development,* p 141

[140] Duesenberry, James S *Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour,* pp 61, 68

colonies started to consume new goods which were produced in the mother countries. They also followed the western life style, which was directly linked to the new consumer articles. The demand for some traditional articles declined and they were not compatible with the newly introduced lifestyles. In the private sphere, the native spent his extremely limited resources on the consumption of newly introduced consumer goods. If we take the whole territory, the limited local resources were spent on the importation of new goods, mostly from the mother countries through new distribution networks. There was a lack of direct pressure on the local resources in colonies as a result of the new consumption habits. The export of raw materials and the employment of local labour for production and other auxiliary services were indirectly linked to the production of these new articles in the mother countries. Some of the new consumer articles, mostly foods and beverages, were produced in the colonies. However, the ownership, management, production, processing and distribution were again under the direct control of the colonisers.

3.3.4 Diversion of consumption: *from one source to another*

The shifting of consumption from one source of supply to another source of supply is defined here as the diversion of consumption. The source of supply could be a separate state, region/province of the same state or a single producer (a firm) in a particular industry. In the process of diversion of consumption, substitution of commodities occurs from one source of supply to another source of supply.

Our main concern here is with the separate state as the main source of supply and not the different regions of the same state or the different producers in the same industry.[141] Therefore, there could be a diversion either from foreign product to domestic product or vice versa. We accept that changes in the source of supply occur through internal consolidation, although they do have impact to the economy through the efficient allocation of resources, they are internal in relation to the economy itself.

Under the diversion of consumption, consumer goods are either substitutable for or complementary to existing goods, which means that their place in the consumer's preference list has already been established. The diversion of consumption could be attributable to one or more of the following.

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[141] Here we assume that the each colony was a separate state, although they had been under foreign occupation.

1. The relative price/cost differences of the consumer goods concerned: There are cheaper and dearer sources of supply in this case. The relative factor endowment, technological progress, may play an important part here. The consumer has a natural tendency to prefer the cheaper sources to the dearer sources if the quality is the same.
2. Distinctive commercial policies: Discriminatory trade policies could divert consumption to a targeted source of supply. In this case, one source of supply receives preference over the other(s) and price structures do not necessarily represent the cost structures. In many instances in history, more than today, the market prices of consumer goods did not reflect their cost structures. Official interventions always distorted the cost structures in favour of local products. In addition, prohibitive transport costs and monopoly practices affected market prices more than today. Consumption diverted from efficient sources to inefficient sources of supply. Over time, inefficient sources were transformed into competitive/more efficient sources due to the large-scale economies or technological advances.

   In the past targeted commercial policies were widely applied in international trade. The state interventions of the currently developed countries and the role of the franchised companies, rather than factors warranted by the international trade theories, seem to have diverted consumption in desired or targeted directions. For example, the commercial policies adopted by the East India Company and the British parliament with the hope of encouraging rising industries in England ruined Indian manufactures in the early years of British rule. The prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from the British market and British goods were brought to the Indian consumer either duty free or at a nominal duty.[142] In less than a century, Indian cotton industry almost disappeared after the free admission of English cotton fabric to the Indian market and similar de-industrialisation was common in many other colonies.[143] The colonial policy would always be designed to provide markets for the colonisers' manufactured goods.[144] India had skilled artisans, sophisticated crafts and rural home

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[142] Dutt, Romesh, *The Economic History of India,* 2 vols. (Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India), 1903, reprinted 1960, Vol. 1, p. xxv; quoted in Adams, Nassau A. *Worlds Apart: The North-South Divide and the International System*, Zed Books, London, 1993, pp. 4-5.

[143] Ferro, Marc. *Colonization: A Global History,* pp. 17-18.

[144] Adams, Nassau A. *Worlds Apart: The North-South Divide and the International System*, p. 5.

industries, but all these were ruined with the introduction of the colonisers' manufactured articles.[145]

3. Economies of scale in distribution: Some sources of supply enjoy economies of scale in procurement, transport, storage and distribution of goods over other sources. The same would apply to quality control and packaging. The producers in the modern sectors have a secure market as well as the facilities of modern services such as financial intermediaries and market information. These advantages were naturally attached to the modern sectors rather than the traditional sectors during the colonial period. Although some consumer articles were being produced by natives in the colonies at a lower cost, there was no efficient mechanism to link the producer and the consumer. The imported goods had the competitive edge over the corresponding local products. This diverted consumers from local sources to imported sources.[146] Urbanisation, mining and plantations in the colonies brought considerable numbers of natives from the traditional subsistence sectors to the modern sectors. However, their consumption was diverted mainly from the traditional local sources of supply to external sources. The traditional producers in the colonies found no stimulus for the expansion of their production to the growing market.
4. Other peripheral factors such as quality differences, change in social attitudes and market information. Handicrafts were important in the pre-industrialised societies, but lost their competitive edge against the factory-made articles. This was because the mass-produced articles in factories were not inherently inferior to handicrafts as sources of visual stimulation.[147]
5. Growing population and income would increase the demand for consumer goods, but diversion occurs only if the existing source of supply is not flexible enough to be adjusted to dynamic changes in a society. In addition, there is the variety hypothesis, which says that, as real income increases, consumers tend to buy more varieties of the same good and a greater number of these varieties come from foreign sources, where the quantity of imports tends to increase more than proportionally

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145 Mittelman, James H. *Out from Underdevelopment: Prospects for the Third World*, p. 43.

146 One of the factors that encouraged imported rice consumption in British Ceylon was that imported rice enjoyed economies of scale in importing and distribution over locally grown rice. See Chapter Five

147 Scitovsky, Tibor. *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction*, p. 252.

with real income per capita.[148] If the existing source of supply is flexible and dynamic enough, some of the new varieties would emerge within the system itself.

The above categorisation was made for the convenience of the study. We do not think that these factors are mutually exclusive. A change in one factor would enhance or be offset by a change in another factor. When all the factors are taken together, it is not difficult to propose that there is sufficient scope for the diversion of consumption from one source of supply to another.

As trade theories implicitly propose, the introduction of international trade diverts consumption from local, inefficient (high cost) production to efficient (low cost) foreign sources. Local production would continue only within the efficient production sectors. However, this is not a principle with which every one agrees. The introduction of international trade to an economically backward country may bring down domestic production still further One of the contributory factors is the demonstration effect.

> 'In the international realm, however, the demonstration effect injects an element of instability and disequilibrium Classic economic theory operated on the assumption that the opening of trade between two countries left taste unchanged and had its effects in inducing shifts in production With the demonstration effect, however, the impact of new trade may be to shift demands even before any impact on the allocation of resources Before trade, the underdeveloped countries consume native foodstuffs, local products, and go without the material trappings of the developed country With the trade introduced, there occurs a substantial change in patterns of trade and a shift in demand in favour of imported goods and against goods produced with the comparative advantages '[149]

3.3.5 Exhaustive Consumption: *a matter for concern*

The utilisation of natural resources in excess of their sustainability is defined here as exhaustive consumption In this process the limited natural resources are extensively overexploited for short term gains, causing havoc

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[148] Meier, Gerald M *International Economics The Theory of Policy,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980, p 41, makes reference to Barker, T 'International Trade and Economic Growth An Alternative to the Neo-classical Approach', *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 1, June 1977, 153-172; This hypothesis is more compatible with the dynamic analysis, since here consumers have a preference for particular source(s) of supply over other(s) In a static model all goods and services are considered homogeneous

[149] Kindleberger, Charles P *Economic Development,* p 141

to traditional sustainable consumption patterns.[150] This is an external effect of the unregulated (mis)allocation of scarce resources among competitive unlimited wants. Exhaustive consumption degrades the environmental balance and reduces the long-term production capacity and the welfare of the inhabitants in affected territories [151] Neo-classical economics considers environmental problems in terms of negative marginal productivity or marginal disutility.[152]

It has been a longstanding tradition to categorise natural resources as renewable and non-renewable resources. The forests, meadows, soil, wild animals, fisheries, water and air are the main components of the former, while the latter consists of such things as minerals or fuel, which are non-replaceable resources once they are used.[153] The renewable resources were closely linked with consumption in the old subsistence economies. Wild products such as fuel wood, herbal plants, tubers, the meat of wild animals, wild berries and bee honey were collected from the forest for direct consumption. It had little or no connection with the market mechanism. Similarly, fish and other marine foods were procured from the sea, lakes, ponds or rivers. There seems to have been a delicate balance between the utilisation of these resources and their regeneration. The rate of consumption hardly exceeded the rate of reproduction. The limited consumer wants were ideally fitted to the carrying capacity of nature.[154]

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150 We pay scant attention to the non-renewable resources, as they belong to the 'land' according to the customary categorisation of factors of production in economics Renewable resources also belong to the same category, but they have 'consumer goods' characteristics in the period under review

151 One could go even further by arguing that no part of the world is immune from the cumulative effects of environmental degradation in some parts of the world, especially in the long run Recent world experiences suggest that environmental issues cannot be isolated within territorial or regional boundaries

152 Hosoda, Eiji 'Environment', in *The Elgar Companion to Classical Economic A-K*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1998, p 256, Environmental economics is a recent offshoot or subdiscipline of economics, although the basic ideas of environmental issues are spread over a vast area of the literature. The main currents are obviously visible in the externalities theories of Marshall and Pigou, the public goods theories of Wicksell and Bowen, the general equilibrium theories of Walras and also in the applied field of cost-benefit analysis

153 Fossil fuels, such as coal and petroleum and natural gas are the least renewable resources, they are effectively exhausted once used Some minerals, such as iron and copper are recyclable, while solar and wind power or ocean waves are immune from extinction by exhaustive consumption Our discussion will not extend to such an in-depth multidisciplinary analysis

154 Any attempt to exceed the carrying capacity of the sustainable consumption level

This was the general story of the pre-capitalist societies in currently underdeveloped countries. The centuries-old equilibrium was broken during the colonial period. Utilisation rates exceeded reproduction rates and, finally, the renewable resources reached their point of extinction (**see chapter 6: *Game and appendix on Environmental Impact***).

The consumption of non-renewable resources reaches back to the remotest past in human history. However, it had never posed a threat in the form of a rapid depletion of resources. The fixed maximum production capacity matched the limited material wants in the old days. The changes in consumption pattern in the colonised countries introduced such enterprises as logging, mining, plantations, commercial animal husbandry, oil and gas extraction, commercial hunting and the killing of animals for sport to the colonies. All of these had far-reaching consequences in these territories. The environmental problems created in colonies could be considered as negative impacts of efficient colonial resource allocation, given the fact that pre-colonial resource allocation had been inefficient.

The natives of colonies were also partly responsible for the exhaustive consumption. On the one hand, internal peace, better health care, a comparatively stable food supply, primary education and other modernisation process reduced death rates and increased the natural population growth rate during the colonial period, but on the other hand, the modernisation drive created new wants among the natives, causing a greater pressure on natural resources than ever before.

> 'The introduction of an orderly framework of administration by the colonial governments and the provision of basic public services, especially public health, have reduced the death rates and caused a rapid growth of population. This has disrupted the traditional balance between population, natural resources and technology.'[155]

The passion for consumerism was growing among traditional societies. The upper classes were at the front of the race and others were following them. Commercialisation opened avenues to everyone, although it may in practice be narrowly limited to the certain strata of society, to find ways and means of satisfying new and growing wants. In two or three generations most natives lose their traditional, simple way of life with its limited material wants.[156]

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was mostly corrected by the reduction of population.

[155] Myint, H. *The Economics of Developing Countries*, pp. 21-22.

[156] The story of environmental problems in human history goes back a very way, beyond capitalism and colonialism. For example, grain production in Mesopotamia was

The long-term impacts of exhaustive consumption in colonies naturally continued into the post-political independence period. Exhaustive consumption pressure appears to have increased in this period. A comprehensive study of exhaustive consumption in the colonies is an interdisciplinary one. It may be a joint endeavour of social scientists, biologists, physicists, chemists, climatologists and other relevant scientists. It is clearly a comparison between pre and post colonial scenarios. The lack of information, especially during the pre-colonial period, would form a hardly surmountable barrier to this type of joint exercise.

For Greg, colonisation and the exploitation of resources has a long history and it goes back even to Roman, Greek and Arabian colonialism. But it was during the European colonial period that it was brought to an unprecedented level. Although the European continent has generally rich soils, it is relatively resource-poor and has very little diversity of fauna and flora compared to tropical regions. To satisfy the growing consumer needs in Europe, new ventures were brought to the colonies. Trading, logging, mining and plantation agriculture have had a substantial environmental effect in the colonies.[157]

3.3.6 Disturbing Consumption: *addictive Behaviour*

The consumption habits which degrade human efficiency, rationality and social relations are defined here as disturbing consumption.[158] The use of narcotics/alcohol and gambling are the major components of disturbing consumption (**see chapter 5: *Beverages & Intoxicants***). We hold that every society has its own tolerable limit for disturbing consumption; exceeding this socially warranted limit has a degrading impact. This was quite obvious in transitory societies which were not educationally or economically mature enough to absorb disturbing consumption. What happened during the colonial period was that not only were the elements of disturbing consumption legalised, but their production and distribution

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increased by an artificial irrigation network some 4000 years ago, causing salinization and reducing the grain harvest. See: Hosoda, Eiji . 'Environment', p. 253.

157 Bankoff, Greg. *Europe's Expanding Resource Frontier: Colonialism and Environment in South East Asia*, Paper for the EDEN/KITLV Workshop Man and Environment in Indonesia, 1500-1950, Leiden, 27-29 June 1996.

158 The purpose of examining disturbing consumption is not to bring the analysis into the realm of religion or ethics or to make a number of normative statements. Our purpose is to examine the impact of this consumption on economic efficiency in a country.

were streamlined [159] The disintegration of the old social and clan ties guaranteed the individual freedom to indulge in disturbing consumption. Although the following account is about the modern period, it sheds a dim light on what happened during the colonial period.

> 'Legalization of such substances as marijuana, heroin, and cocaine surely will reduce the prices By the law of the downward sloping demand function, their consumption will rise The effects of a fall in drug prices on demand would be countered by the education programme But since drug use by the poor would be more sensitive to the price fall than to greater information about harmful long-run effects, drug addiction among the poor is likely to become more important relative to addiction among the middle class and rich For similar reasons, addiction among the young may rise more than that among other segments of the population '[160]

Disturbing consumption retarded the economic progress of colonies. Firstly; disturbing consumption was directly responsible for draining out the liquid assets from the ordinary masses in the colonies In the early stages of a transitional society the ordinary native has a limited access to liquid assets, which mostly consist of money.[161] The draining away of the ordinary native's limited money seriously checked the accumulation of capital in the

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[159] Some of this consumption, at least in certain societies, goes back beyond the European interventions For example, the imports of foreign wines and liquors from early times into India can be traced to Kautilya, who refers to foreign customers in liquor shops, lying with their beautiful mistress in intoxication, grape wine he names *madu* Foreign wines were definitely imported into India in the first century AD, when wines were imported from Italy See Saletore, R N *Early Indian Economic History*, Curzon Press, London, 1975, pp 144-147

What happened during the period was that new consumer practices were added to the old, limited and perhaps highly restrictive consumption The production and distribution of narcotics/alcohol was either a colonial monopoly or directly controlled by the colonial tax regimes as a conspicuous source of colonial revenue Such forms of gambling as horse racing were introduced with the blessings of the colonial administrations, while some others originated with the natives themselves as complementary to narcotics or alcohol

[160] Becker, Gray S et al 'Rational Addiction and the Effects of Price on Consumption', *Journal of Political Economy*, 96, no 4, 1988 Reproduced in Gray S Becker *Accounting for Tastes*, pp 77, 83

[161] Gold, jewellery, other valuables and perhaps grains, animals may have long become near-perfect liquid assets in these old societies, but none of these are flexible enough to bring about great socio-economic changes as money does There were occasions on which some natives lost their fixed assets, such as land, as a result of disturbing consumption However, the general experience was the draining away of liquid resources from the native

traditional sectors, which received little or no attention from the colonial governments and colonial private investors.

Secondly; although it is more an ethical than an economic matter, there was still a distant relationship to economic performance in such societies. As a rule, social relations were stronger in pre-capitalist societies than in capitalist societies. It was essential to these societies, since most of the production was organised on the basis of collective responsibilities and collective gains. Disturbing consumption weakened the strong social bonds as well as the social obligation for production. A certain percentage of crimes and the family problems in these societies were also directly attributable to disturbing consumption. The later is important in a society where the family ties are stronger and earning and production are a function of family efforts. The harm to the family unity disturbs the flow of earnings and reduces the amount of income that the family can plough back.

> 'The total cost of addictive goods to the consumer equals the sum of the good's price and the money value of any future adverse effects, such as the negative effects on earnings and health ..Money price tends to be relatively more important to poorer and younger consumers, partly because they generally place a smaller monetary value on health and other harmful future effects.'[162]

Only a fraction of any society indulges in disturbing consumption. The degree of socio-economic maturity ultimately decides the scale of negative impacts that might be created by disturbing consumption.[163] A mature capitalist society has an edge over an immature/transitory society in absorbing the shocks generated by disturbing consumption to a greater extent; although it is not fully immune to the impacts.[164] The high individualistic nature, loosened family ties and the low inter-personal dependency keeps the social cost at a minimum level in a mature society.[165]

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[162] Becker, Gray S et al. 'Rational Addiction and the Effects of Price on Consumption': Reproduced in Gray S. Becker. *Accounting for Tastes*, p. 81.

[163] A society with high and increasing income generated by human skills and accumulated knowledge is here considered to be a mature society.

[164] The US undeclared war against drugs would be a good example in this case.

[165] Drug addiction seems to be largely responsible for the widespread bicycle and car cassette theft in the Netherlands A reliable cycle lock is dearer than a good quality second hand bicycle in this country, where cycling is the dominant mode of transport for all walks of life and for all social groups However, the economic disturbance caused by stealing is within the tolerable range of the ordinary Dutch household If a hen, goat or cow is stolen from the peasant farm in a developing country, it is well beyond the economically bearable limit of the ordinary household in those societies.

Even if a higher percentage of the population are engaged in disturbing consumption, the economic cost is a minute fraction both of individual and national income. In addition, the efficient administration could minimise the scale of negative effects.

Disturbing consumption generates positive as well negative effects. In the positive sphere, some resources could be brought into the production process and new sources of income could be opened up. A certain amount of capital might have been accumulated among a few natives who had a direct involvement with production or distribution. It is widely known that many wealthy natives spent their newly accumulated fortunes from this or other ventures on conspicuous consumption rather than investing in the productive sector.

The opium production and distribution policy in British India helped the colonial administration there, but had grave consequences in countries like Ceylon and China. The tax on the opium exported from India was a very important item of revenue for the British administration in that country. Opium was produced under the government monopoly and almost all of it was sent to China.[166] The supply of opium was fully controlled by the British East India Company. The drug accounted for about one-fifth of the Company's total earnings,[167] but it had far-reaching consequences on Chinese society. Because of the harmful effects of the opium and the depletion of valuable currency, the Chinese authorities prohibited the import of this stuff, but did not have sufficient power to control of smuggling into the country with the help of corrupt Chinese officials.[168] Opium had been used as a medicine in India and China for a thousand years or more without causing any problem and the smoking of opium did not begin until the 1620s. At first, opium was mixed with tobacco, a practise which the Chinese learned from European traders [169]

3.4 Ex ante and Ex post Analysis: *possible options and results achieved*

The aspects of the changes in consumption patterns can be examined either as possible experiences which an economy may undergo or as experiences

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166 Smith, Adam *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Note xx, pp 576-577, information had been updated to 1861-1862 in the 1863 edition

167 Roberts, John G *The Colonial Conquest in Asia*, p 32

168 ibid, p 32

169 ibid, p 32

realised in a given period of time The former is widely known as *ex ante* analysis and the later as *ex post* analysis This methodology was introduced to economics by Gunnar Myrdal in the 1930s We have examined the above four aspects of changes in consumption pattern as the *ex ante* experiences of colonies

The *ex ante* experiences are transformed into *ex post* experiences according to the consumer responses to the different aspects of the changes in consumption pattern When the necessary conditions for the changes in consumption patterns are created, a consumer may respond to them in four major ways, which we identify as defiant, creative, adaptive and barren responses [170]

3.4.1 Defiant response: *adamant consumer*

There is no significant response even if the conditions for the changes in consumption patterns come into existence Cultural and religious values, nationalistic sentiments may encourage a defiant response Consumers with conservative attitudes may prefer to consume old products rather than new ones [171] Beef, pork or liquor would not be consumed in a society where strong religious beliefs control consumer Behaviour Referring to the consumer culture, Belk says religion could be one of the barriers to its spread [172] The narrow definitions of a consumer article would evoke defiant responses than the broader definitions For example, pork or beef is a narrower definition within the broader category of meat The defiant response to meat consumption would not be as strong as to pork or beef Similarly, strong nationalistic values may create a defiant response For example, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, Indians responded defiantly to imported cotton cloth and began to use locally produced cloth

3.4.2 Creative Response: *ideal for growth*

A marked response is made to the conditions created for changes in consumption patterns As a whole, the gains for the economy are higher

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[170] These responses could easily be extended beyond the consumption framework to the other aspects of underdeveloped countries For example, conservatism is a defiant response to economic incentives in a society

[171] James, Jeffrey *Consumption and Development*, p 20

[172] Belk, Russell W 'Third World Consumer Culture', p 109

than the losses. The resources released from diverted consumption are re-employed in more efficient sectors of production. A higher share of the consumption created is met by local production, new versions or new models are designed within the economy; innovation and invention are directed even to previously unknown consumer articles. Even previously idle resources are brought into the production process as a result and the surplus products are channelled to the international market. Economic history is rich in creative responses, although the majority of them are from developed countries. A few of them are highlighted here to support our argument.

The potato was introduced to Europe from South America as a new consumer article by the invading Spaniards in the second half of the 16th century. It was the major crop in continental Europe by the end of the 18th century. The new crop could feed more people than the traditional bread grains which it in part displaced.[173] Here, the Europeans made a creative response to changes in the staple diet. Similarly, certain consumer articles imported from the Orient began to be produced in Europe with the support of more advanced technology.

> ' oriental fashions brought to Europe in small quantities along with the spices and pepper uncovered a burgeoning demand that radically attracted European imitators Lacquer work, caned furniture, porcelain, and calicoes were the most important of these The Dutch shipped over 3 million pieces of Chinese porcelain to Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century Civil strife in China then cut off the supply but demand for porcelain had grown so that only domestic imitations could hope to satisfy the new markets After 1650 the city of Delft found a new importance as a ceramic centre, and in England small local potters came to face the competition of the semi-industrial firms of north Staffordshire which captured large markets by adapting oriental designs to their products North Staffordshire production increased tenfold in the first half of the eighteenth century '[174]

Similarly Japanese made a creative response to changes in consumption pattern. At the early stages of the Meiji period numerous foreign consumer articles, some of them were novel to the Japanese consumer, flooded into the country. Over time most of these articles were produced within the country itself making pressure to local resources.[175]

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173 Dalton, George *Economic Systems & Society*, p 31

174 De Vries, Jan *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis 1600-1750*, p 188

175 Yasuzawa, Mine 'The Changes of Lifestyle Changing Consumption Patterns in Meiji Japan', in H Baudet and M Bogucka (orgs), *Types of Consumption Traditional and Modern*, Académai Kiadò, Budapest, 1982, pp 41-42

In the colonies, the natives made few creative responses to the changes in consumption patterns Either the creative responses of these people were thwarted by the colonial rulers or certain climatic, social and cultural factors hindered their creative responses The state policies of the developed countries fostered the creative responses of those countries in one way or another Creative consumer responses are growth friendly at any stage of economic development

3.4.3 Adaptive Response: *a kind of trade off*

The changes in consumption patterns occur under the adaptive response The economy does not receive large benefits as a result of the changes in consumption patterns, although the losses created by the process are offset by some gains The resources released from the diverted consumption may re-employed partly or fully in new production sectors However, the economy as whole is incapable of satisfying a considerable proportion of the created demand from local sources The international division of labour introduced to the colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America created more or less similar conditions in those territories

Jones and Mérat say that the production of crops and minerals for sale abroad made available of wide range of exotic articles to tropical Africa This greatly increased the mobility of men and goods, while work for wages, private ownership of land and widespread familiarity with money profoundly changed the traditional economic order All these have also undoubtedly increased the economic product and economic wellbeing of the people of the tropical Africa Some consumer goods such as foods and clothing are locally made, but a very high proportion of all other consumer goods come from overseas [176]

3.4.4 Barren Response: *soil erosion*

There is a response to the conditions created for the changes in consumption patterns, but no appreciable economic benefits are generated as a result and the economy loses The diverted consumption is not brought back into the local supply The resources released from the process are either left idle or employed in inefficient sectors of the economy As a rule,

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[176] Jones, William O and Merat, Christian *Consumption of Exotic Consumer Goods as an Indicator of Economic Achievement in Ten Countries of Tropical Africa*, p

the consumption created is simply satisfied from foreign sources. Once the consumption is created or shifted, it continues further for the sake of consumption. The barren response has continued into the post-colonial period as a colonial legacy.

Kaunda says that the causes of Zambian economic ills are not exclusively external, but also include internal factors. They are largely attributable to the attitudes of the people being consumption, rather than production, oriented. This is easily illustrated by the massive amounts of financial resources that are spent on importing consumer goods, most of which could easily be produced locally to meet domestic requirements. The nation was spending money on articles such as imported wooden spoons used for eating ice cream. He questions if there was not an enterprising group of Zambians who would be able to fell trees in their forests and make wooden spoons [177] The lowest-income households in Uganda aspired to own radios and gramophones, while middle income groups bought watches, clocks, motorcycles, and more expensive clothes.[178] The higher income households in Ethiopia set examples to the rest of the people by quickly turning to the market infant formula and baby foods [179] In all of the African countries, there seems to be a strong general craving for the industrial products of the Western World [180]

> 'Other than the destruction of traditional culture, what is the harm in such emulation of Western goods? One problem is that local products always come in second best and are less popular than prominent Western brands, even when they are of higher quality and lower priced '[181]

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[177] Kaunda, Kenneth D *Orientation to Consumption Versus Production*, A Speech Delivered at the Opening of the 10th National Independence Party at Mulungashi Hall, 27th - 30th June, 1977, Zambia Information Services, Lusaka, 1977

[178] Belk, Russell W 'Third World Consumer Culture', p 112, makes reference to Blair, T L V *Africa. Market Profile*, Praeger, New York, 1965

[179] Ibid , p 113, makes reference to Landgren-Gudina, Marie-Ann 'Weaning Food and low-income consumers in Ethiopia', in *Appropriate Products, Employment and Technology Case Studies on Consumer Choice and Basic Needs in Developing Countries'*, Wouter van Ginneken & Christopher Baron (eds), St Martin's Press, New York, 1984, pp 195-210

[180] Jones, William O and Mérat, Christian *Consumption of Exotic Consumer Goods as an Indicator of Economic Achievement in Ten Countries of Tropical Africa*, Reprinted from Food Research Institute Studies, vol III, no I, Stanford University, California, 1962

[181] Belk, Russell W 'Third World Consumer Culture', *Research and Marketing*,p 117; makes reference to Bar-Haim, Gabriel 'The Meaning of Western Commercial Artefacts for East European Youth', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 16 (2) July, 1987,

High-income families, with their conspicuous spending, set the trend in the barren response. Referring to the period 1958-1973, Huizer makes following comments about the Latin American landed gentry. 'The land owning elites usually spend their considerable earnings conspicuously and in ways highly detrimental to the national economies, rather than in a manner that would stimulate development.'[182] The tradition of India and Africa was to keep livestock as a traditional sign of wealth; now livestock have largely been replaced by western goods [183] The consumers of the developing country are not immune from pleasure-seeking Behaviour. They consume beyond their income.

> They are often '. attracted to and indulge in aspects of conspicuous consumption before they have secured adequate food, clothing and shelter. The most dramatic instance of such "premature" consumer culture involves sacrificing nutrition for what might well be regarded as the superficial luxury of western consumption items The reasons for such a unique development involves the presence of dramatically different consumer life-styles in the other parts of the world, the increased visibility of the more opulent of these life-styles to Third World consumers, and various factors such as urbanisation that bring about altered interpersonal attitudes in the Third World '[184]

3.5 Conclusions

As with the four major aspects of changes in consumption patterns, the four responses to them are simultaneously present in a society. The final outcome is decided, however, by the relative power of each response. The effect of every response could be examined at either a micro or a macro level. The final outcome of the changes in consumption patterns is ultimately decided by the long-term pressure on local resources. The following questions have to be answered here. How many resources are displaced from production as a result of the changes in consumption? How many of them are reabsorbed in production? What is the efficiency of the utilisation of resources at the end? We are concerned here with the reallocation of the resources of a subsistence economy to meet the changes

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pp 205-226

[182] Huizer, Gerrit *Peasant Rebellion in Latin America,* 1973, p 1

[183] Belk, Russell W 'Third World Consumer Culture', p 113, makes reference to Castro, Alfonso P , Thomas Hakansson and David Brokensaha, 'Indicators of rural inequality', *World Development,* 9 (5), May 1981, 401-27

[184] Belk, Russell W 'Third World Consumer Culture', pp 103-104

in consumption patterns and with their opportunity cost. We deal with these issues in Chapter Nine in the context of our case study.

Our point of departure is the subsistence economy in the pre-colonial period. Nevertheless, the bountifulness of nature has not treated every nation equally. No country can satisfy all its necessities within its own territory in a modern exchange economy. There are certain insurmountable natural barriers against the procurement of all necessary consumer goods within a country's own territory at any advanced stage of human society. In addition, there are social and cultural barriers which do not warrant the production of all kinds of goods to meet the consumer needs of a nation. We do not propose the self-sufficiency of colonies or former colonies as a development strategy. We accept the immense power of international trade for economic growth and development. Our argument is that the consumption patterns which came into being during the colonial period are not essentially compatible with the optimum resource allocation of those territories.

We have not paid due attention to such factors as technology, savings, investment and intermediary goods and services in our analysis. We assume that all these factors are subordinated to consumption and to the demands of the market for consumer goods.

3. 6 Elaboration of Research Questions: *A link to the case study*

So far we have discussed the theoretical issues relating to our research, while dealing mainly with the first six research questions - *economic development and economic history, the consumer and consumption, the role of consumption in an economy, consumer theories and concepts, the theoretical relationship between consumption and economic growth and/or (under)development, and the historical evidence emanating from countries other than Ceylon to support the relationship between consumption and economic growth and development* - as set out in the section on the research questions in Chapter One. The remainder of the work will concentrate mainly on the case study and the drawing of conclusions. We will also deal with the remaining research questions in this part of the thesis.

The case study starts with a prelude to the pre-British periods, which provides some essential basic information to the reader who is unfamiliar with the island's history. It is followed by Chapter Four, which may be regarded as the launching pad of the case study. In this part of the work we

address research question number 7 - ***the consumption pattern prevalent in the pre-British period.*** The information in this chapter covers:

- the subsistence economy of our alternative analytical framework and
- the traditional consumption pattern in the island.

The traditional consumption pattern is only a part of the subsistence economy. We examine most of the important elements in the subsistence economy other than consumption in order to create a clearer picture of the pre-British economy, which we describe in our analysis as an undeveloped economy. Here we will look into:

- the consumer needs of households and the ways in which these needs were satisfied,
- the general living conditions of the people,
- the exchange of goods and the role of money,
- the division of labor and specialization.

The indices compiled to supplement the main text are partly relevant to the undeveloped subsistence economy.

The changes in the consumption pattern during the British administration are discussed in Chapters Five to Eight, in which we also deal with the remaining research questions. In this part of the thesis we test our alternative analytical framework against the empirical evidence from the case study. The appendices are also used for this purpose, when and where necessary. The conclusions in Chapter Nine indicate whether our alternative analytical framework has passed the first test and is eligible to pass through further tests in future studies before it can become a theory.

Research question 8 is about the ***ways in which the traditional consumption pattern was subject to changes during the British period.*** This question covers the major aspects of changes in the consumption pattern in British Ceylon and the responses made to them during the period. The major aspects of the changes in the consumption pattern which we will look for as set out in the analytical framework are:

- diversion of consumption,
- creation of consumption,
- disturbing consumption and
- exhaustive consumption.

The responses made to the changes in consumption patterns may be identified as:

- defiant response,
- creative response,
- adaptive response and
- barren response

The aspects of the changes in consumption patterns are the opportunities opened or the conditions created for the changes in consumption in the economy of British Ceylon. The responses made to them are the realized outcome to changes in the consumption pattern. The major aspects of the changes in consumption pattern and the responses made to them have not been assigned to individual chapters, but have been spread over the whole text, unless otherwise stated.

Research question 9 is about the ***factors contributing to the changes in consumption patterns during the British period.*** Here we look into the factors that may be attributable to the major aspects of the changes in consumption patterns as addressed in *question 8*.

Mainstream economics relies on *price and income* in consumer behavior analyses. The factors that may affect the major aspects of the changes in consumption patterns in our analysis are many *in addition to income and price*: i.e.

- growing needs and population,
- free imports policies,
- quality factor,
- changes in attitudes and the formation of a new consumer value system,
- introduction of new consumer articles,
- Innovations,
- expansion of trade and exchange economy,
- monetization,
- development of communications,
- streamlining of the distribution of certain goods within the island by the colonial administration,
- personal freedom and social mobility

These major factors may individually or collectively affect the major aspects of the changes in the consumption pattern and create the conditions for the responses to the changes in the consumption pattern. The final economic outcome is determined according to the nature of responses made to them.

Our final conclusions are drawn from Chapter Nine, which has been devoted to the research question 10. It is concerned with discovering whether changes in the consumption pattern have transformed the subsistence undeveloped economy into an underdeveloped economy. Research question 10 has two parts: i.e.

10 (a) ***the extent to which the changes in the consumption pattern affected the allocation of resources, production and economic growth and (under)development in British Ceylon.*** Here we will look into the changes caused to

- aggregate production and income and
- to the general living standards of the island

We compare and contrast here historical experiences of Ceylon with similar experiences of some other countries when and where necessary.

10 (b) ***whether important changes occurred in the economy as a result of the changes in the consumption pattern in conformity with the philosophy advanced by the international trade theories in main stream economics.***

Here we will examine

- whether the resources displaced as a result of the changes in the consumption pattern were re-employed in more efficient production sectors and
- how to deal with the creation of consumption, disturbing consumption and exhaustive consumption and the different responses made to the changes in aspects of consumption.

The following chapters address the research questions in greater detail. The reader may find that some of the information they contain seems to belong more to the production side of the economy than to the consumption side. Nevertheless, such perceptions need to be refined, taking the following factors into account.

- Our point of departure in this analysis is consumption and it may contain a certain amount of production side information, just as production side analyses always rely on a certain amount of

consumption side information. To make any argument clearer and more complete, consumption oriented analysis needs help from production side information and vice versa. Production and consumption side analyses cannot be separated and isolated from each other exclusively, but are related to each other to some extent and overlap at certain points.

- The different aspects of consumption as examined in mainstream economics have been discussed in Chapter Two. We also gave our own definition of the changes in the consumption pattern in Chapter Three. The examination of the changes in the consumption pattern in the case study is predominantly within the framework of our definition.

- Some of the information in Chapter Four is special and goes beyond the boundary of consumption. It is a result of the intentional plan to draw a complete picture of the pre-British period in Ceylon.

PART TWO

CONSUMPTION IN PRE BRITISH CEYLON

It is customary to account Ceylon's history as commencing from 544 BC on the basis that Vijaya, the discarded son of a royal Aryan family in Bengal, north-east India, made a quite unexpected, but important, arrival on the island.[1] Then there were, legends say, primitive people belonging to three clans. Vijaya captured the throne with the help of a clan queen called Kuveni. He had arrived with seven hundred of his followers[2] and kept close contact with India after settling down in the country. This conquest brought a considerable number of people into the island from their ancestral land, possessing admirable skills, knowledge and culture. The ultimate result of the settlement was to transform the island's society from a primitive state into a civilized one. This is considered to be the beginning of Sinhalese civilization in the island. This tradition, however, runs contrary to the recent archaeological discoveries at Ibbankatuwa, near Dambulla, in central Ceylon.[3] And there is another opinion that the Aryan colonization of Ceylon took place long before the date given in the *Mahavamsa* chronicle.

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[1] Brohier, R. L. *Discovering Ceylon*, Lake House Investments Ltd., Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1982, p. 7; The first capital of Ceylon, built by Vijaya, received the name of Tambapanni, Tammanna Adaviya, or Tammanna Nuwara. It lies about six or eight miles to the east of Puttalam, where a few rough pillars and slabs scattered at random in a thick jungle are the only remains now visible. See: Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. II, No. 6, 1853. pp. 55-56.

[2] *The Mahavamsa*, Wilhem Geiger(trans.), The Ceylon Government Information Department, Colombo, 1950, p. 55.

[3] An agrarian society skilled in metal usage and following a budding hierarchical social pattern existed in the island in 700 BC. There were agricultural settlements in the Dry Zone from 900 BC and these communities had connections with other regions in South Asia. It is assumed that these early people were also descendants of Balangoda man, who lived on the island around 6000 BC. See: *The Sunday Leader*(Internet edition), 17th November, 1996.

Since very early times, south Indian Dravidians, speaking Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese or Telugu reached the island either as invaders or as peaceful immigrants.[4] 'The colonization of the North and East of the Island by Hindu Tamils seems to have been due quite as much to peaceful penetration as to war. In many places it is sufficiently recent to have preserved Sinhalese village names in a form which cannot be older than the middle ages.'[5] The island received much more influence from Tamil-speaking people than the rest of the Dravidians. The *Mahavamsa* provides ample evidence of this. Within a few years of their arrival, Vijaya and his followers brought their wives as well as craftsmen from South India. 'These early Tamil settlers have been supplemented almost throughout the 2,500 years of the Island's history by bands of Dravidian settlers from the mainland. A good portion of these have no doubt been absorbed into the Sinhalese nation. The rest are known today as Ceylon Tamils.'[6] In a similar manner, a large number of Sinhalese would have been absorbed into the Tamil community when the northern provinces came under their invasions.

Colombo became a Muslim trading settlement in about 700 AD[7] and, by about the 9th century, the Muslim traders had become well established community in Ceylon [8]

> 'The Muhammadans or *Moormen* are said by Sir A Johnson to have first settled in the Island in the early part of the eighth century, they formed a portion of those Arabs of the house of Haslum who were driven from Arabia by the

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[4] Cartman, Rev James *Hinduism in Ceylon*, M D Gunasena & Co Ltd , Colombo, 1957, p 5

[5] Codrington, H W *A Short History of Ceylon*, Macmillan and Co , London, 1926, p. 50

[6] Tambimuttu, E L *Dravida A History of the Tamils from Pre-historic Times to 1800*, Colombo, 1945, p 11, quoted in Cartman, Rev James *Hinduism in Ceylon*, p 5, Some authors argue that the early history of the Ceylon Tamils is problematic. 'In the construction of the history of the Ceylon Tamil the early stages pose a problem of their own This largely follows on the scarcity of absolute historical data, either of chronicles or of evidence from archaeology on a scale commensurate to the magnitude of the problem ' Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon A General Introduction*, Kalai Nilayam Ltd , Colombo, 196x, p 16

[7] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography* A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Ph D , Birkbeck College, University of London, 1960, p 53, makes reference to A Johnson, Royal Asiatic Society, no 1, p 537 and also to G C Mendis, Early History of Ceylon, p 68

[8] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon. III - Ancient Ceylon's Trade with the Empires of the Eastern and Western World '*The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol 1, No 4, April, 1954, p 306

> tyranny of the Caliph Abdul Melek Ben Merwen, and who proceeding south wards, made various settlements in the South of India and Malacca '[9]

There are scholars who, in accordance with the popular European model, categorize the entire history of the island as ancient, mediaeval and modern. They claim that each period possesses marked characteristics of its own, though the division into periods does not necessarily follow the European chronology.[10] The divisions generally coincide with the political changes. Nevertheless, they shed some dim light on social and economic changes as well [11]

1 Ancient Civilization: *the golden age*

This period extends from the 5th century BC to the middle of the 13th century AD, when the Sinhalese kingdom was shifted to the Wet Zone of the island.[12] It is invariably referred to as the ancient period, *Rajarata* or *Anuradhapura-Polonnaruwa* periods. The civilization of this period was essentially that of the Dry Zone of the country and the people lived in isolated villages, produced their own foods and most of their necessities, and depended little on the rest of the country [13] Their chief food item was

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[9] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', pp 56-57

[10] See, for, example Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, The Colombo Apothecaries' Co , Ltd , Colombo, 1948 p 1

[11] Alternatively one may apply the Marxist modes of production or Rostowian Stage analysis, although Marx used a special term 'Asiatic Mode of Production' to refer to socio-economic relations in Asian societies prior to the European colonization.

[12] In this long period, the kingdom is said to have shifted from its original site of Thammannanuwara to Wijithapura, Anuradhapura, Magama, Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa The period is considered to have been the heyday of Sinhalese civilisation in the island

[13] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 1 Except for a short spell in the Southern Magama kingdom, the whole civilisation and seat of government had been centered in the northern Dry Zone of the country during the ancient period
Lekam-mitiya or the Sinhalese registers keep the records of old Sri Lanka's villages and departments King Pandukabhaya fixed the boundaries of villages in all parts of the country in 437 BC See Reimers, Edmund 'Feudalism in Ceylon', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, vol xxxi, no 81, 1928, p 18
The political division that existed in the ancient period consisted of *Rájadhání* or districts under the immediate supervision of the kings, *Janapada* or districts under chiefs, *Nagara* or cities, *Patunugam* or seaport towns, *Gam* or village communities with

rice and cultivation was carried out with the help of the artificial irrigation systems. The ruins of ancient irrigation network testify to a well organized and prosperous economy.

> 'Most of the tanks were constructed in the days of the ancient kings, when stone-hewing seems to have been as common an employment as making earthen cooking utensils is now The whole land is strewn with block of carved and hewn stone, and the sluices of the tanks were made of the same durable material, and remain to this day '14

The elders of each village controlled its affairs, settling disputes, punishing offenders, and directing agricultural activities, while the kings maintained the law and order of the country with the assistance of chiefs whom they appointed over the various districts.[15] The kings built huge tanks or artificial reservoirs and extensive channels, utilizing rivers and streams to provide the people with water for irrigating their paddy fields.[16] The *gansabhawa*, or village council, maintained the village irrigation units and allocated to each individual of the village his role in maintaining the irrigation works and his cultivation rights.[17] The village communities doubtless enjoyed very great independence and the royal control was exercised by officials who went on circuit annually, somewhat in the manner of the English assizes, to administer justice and collect the king's dues. This was done until as late as the early seventeenth century.[18]

Many features of the island's present civilization have their roots in the ancient periods. The Sinhalese and the Tamils settled in the island during

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heads of villages. In addition, there were *Batgam*, villages granted by the king to individuals for special services or as special marks of honor, *Ayagam* villages paid taxes to the king, *Gopalugam* villages were occupied by herdsmen. There were also *Anabim*, pasture grounds, *Dabim*, game preserves, *Vanantara*, forests. see. de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol XXXI, No 81, 1928 p 64, The author's analysis is partly based on the Sinhalese work *Saddharmálankáraya* composed by Dammakirti Maha Thera of Gadaládeni Vihare in 1371-1410, covering the period from 200 BC to 196 AD, and partly on the Pali work 'Rasawahini', compiled by Védeha Mahá Thera in the thirteenth century

14 Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO. 57/51/1870

15 Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 1

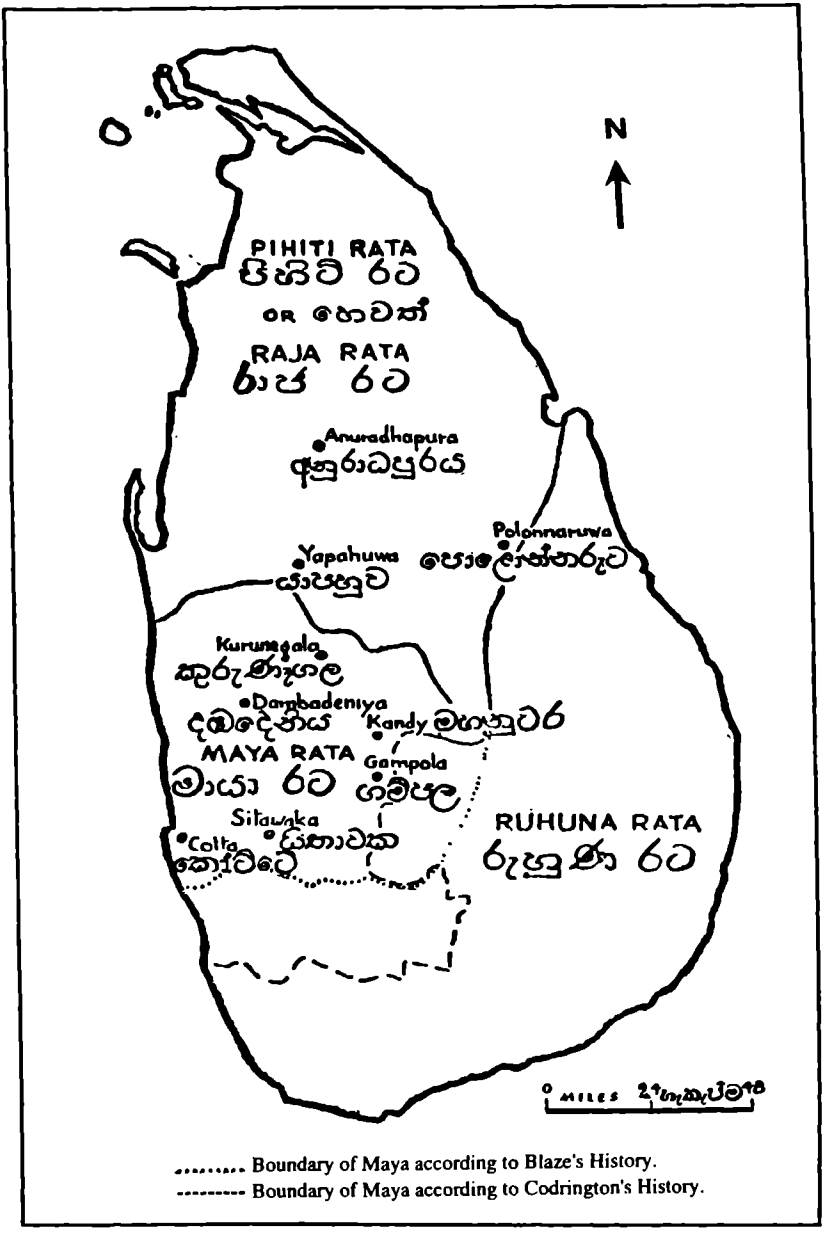
16 ibid , p 1

17 Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber* Thesis submitted for the degree of MSc , London School of Economics and Political Science, 1961, pp 327-328

18 Codrington, H W *A Short History of Ceylon*, p 43

MAP 1

Ancient Provinces and Capitals of Ceylon



Source: Elsie K. Cook (1931). *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev. by K. Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953.

this time.[19] The two major religions - and Hinduism - were introduced to the island. Muslims settled on the island as a trading community in the early 8th century.

2 Wet Zone Civilization: *declining prosperity*

This period runs from 1235 AD until the whole island became a British Crown Colony in 1815. The invasions from Southern India and the civil wars forced the Sinhalese rulers to leave their ancient irrigation civilization in the northern parts of the country and to establish themselves in the south-west, the Wet Zone of the island, which was the least developed area during the ancient periods.[20] This is sometimes considered to be the dawn of the mediaeval period of the island's history.[21] The power of the Sinhalese monarchy was greatly reduced by the shift to the south-west and a number of princelets began to control the various parts of the island.[22] Throughout this period, except a for short interlude during the reign of Parakramabahu VI (1412-1468), the country had more than one monarch. It was during this period that the strengthening of feudal bondage, the decline of the ancient prosperity, the mushrooming of small kingdoms and the European invasions took place.

3 Arrival of the Portuguese: [23] *happy go lucky*

The Ceylonese had to share the island's administration with the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, in that order, during the *Wet Zone Civilization.*

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[19] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 3.

[20] ibid., pp. 1-3.

[21] ibid., p. 3.

[22] Mendis, G. C. *The Early History of Ceylon*. p. 105; quoted in S. Rajaratnam. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p.329.

[23] The Portuguese period of the country is commonly considered to run from 1505 to 1658. The period has been divided into three phase: (a) from 1505 to 1551, (b) from 1551 to 1597, (c) from 1597 to 1658. In the first of these, the Portuguese were more or less allies of the Kotte kingdom. In the next phase the Kotte regime became a Portuguese protectorate. In the last phase, the Portuguese ruled directly over the Kingdom of Kotte which, by this time, had become the Kingdom of Sitawaka. In 1542 the king of Jaffna became a vassal of the Portuguese. In 1620 Ceylon became a Portuguese possession. See: Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon Today and Yesterday: Main Currents of Ceylon History*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Colombo, 1963, p. 49.

The Portuguese period of the country, from their initial landing on the island's coast, lasted from 1505-1658 AD. When they first arrived to Ceylon in 1505, there was no Sinhalese king firmly established on the western plain of the island.[24] During this time, Ceylon had been divided into three political units and the Portuguese first contacted the Kingdom of Kotte, which was then the strongest kingdom of Ceylon. The other two kingdoms were nominally subservient to the Sinhalese kingdom of Kotte.[25] The central highland was under the rule of a separate monarch. It was less populous and poorer than Kotte. The third political identity was the Jaffana kingdom. This kingdom was also based on a subsistence economy, but the relative infertility of the soil in the area stimulated crafts such cloth making and the kingdom had special commercial and cultural ties with South India.[26] The Portuguese gradually gained political and economic power over the coastal plains of the island. They were interested chiefly in securing the monopoly of cinnamon, of which Ceylon produced the whole of the world's supply at this period. During the Portuguese period, Colombo was their chief administrative, commercial, defensive and religious center.[27] It was declared a Royal city by the Portuguese in 1543 and the choice owed more to considerations of local strategy than to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean. It was close to the Sinhalese capital city of Kotte, the center of the cinnamon trade and their enemies - the Muslims - were there [28]

4 Followed by Dutch:[29] *on a business footing*

The Dutch expelled the Portuguese from Ceylon one hundred and fifty years after their possession of it.[30] Their administration of the maritime

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[24] Wijesinhe, J. E. 'Agriculture-Past & Present', *The National Monthly of Ceylon*, Vol. VI, no. 2, Dec. 1918, p. 39.

[25] Cartman, Rev. James. *Hinduism in Ceylon*, p. 41.

[26] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, H. W. Cave & Company, Colombo, Ceylon, 1972, pp. 1-2.

[27] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography*, pp.58-60.

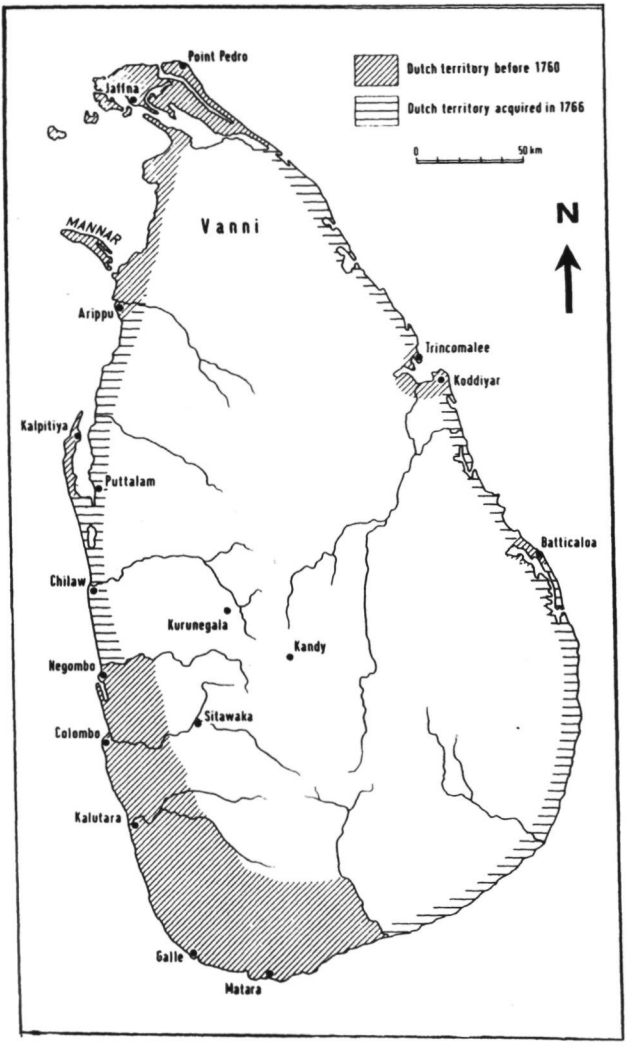
[28] ibid., pp. 54-57.

[29] The Dutch rule in the island lasted nearly one and half centuries. It was not really an administration of the Dutch nation, but by a profit-maximizing company, the V.O.C, *Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie.*

[30] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, Tisara Prakasakayo, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1983, p. 14.

MAP 2

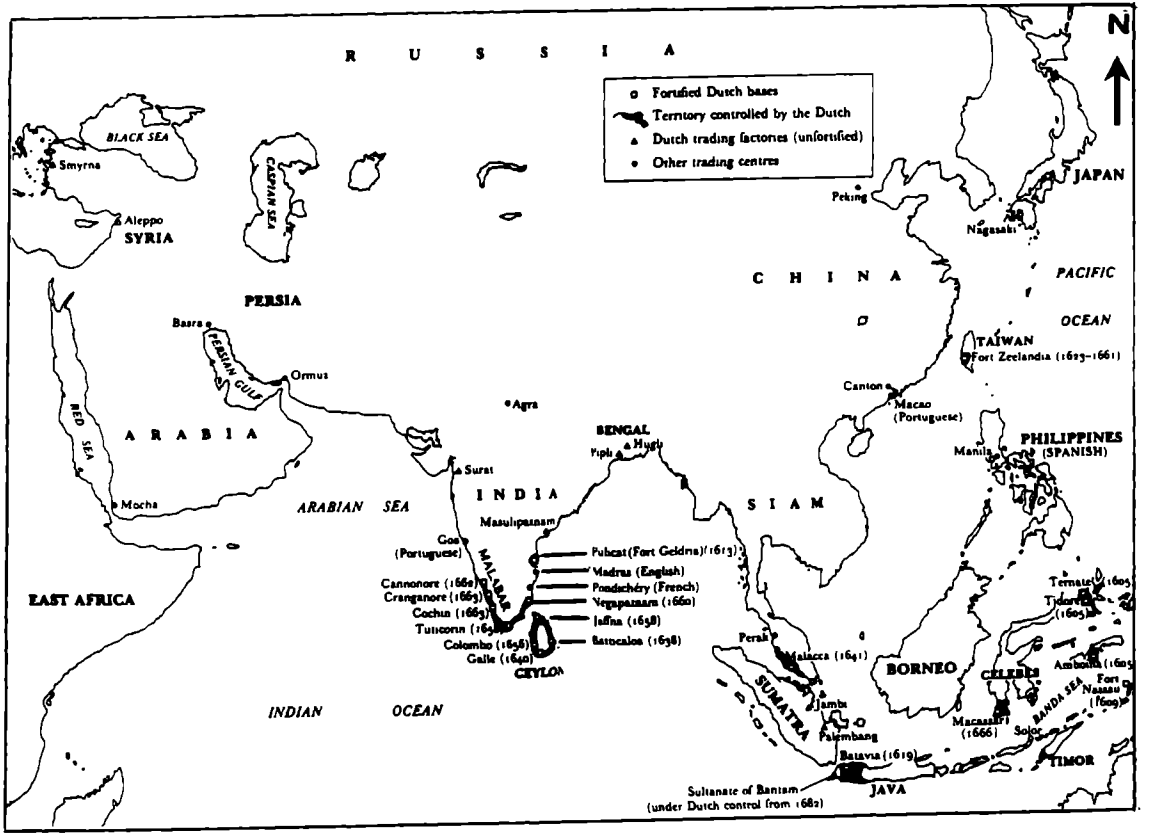
Dutch Territories in Ceylon



Source: Jurrien van Goor. Jan Kompenie as Schoolmaster: Dutch Education in Ceylon 1690-1795, Wolters-Noordhoff, 1978.

MAP 3

The Dutch Empire in Asia at its Height, c. 1670



Source. Jonathan I. Israel. *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990.

provinces of the island ran roughly from 1658-1796 AD. The inhabitants in the maritime territory under the Dutch East India Company in 1786 numbered 817,000. This was an approximate figure and the total population of the island during that period was estimated to be 1.5 million.[31] The Dutch, unlike the Portuguese, made a genuine attempt to govern rather than occupy the maritime provinces and, in a period of substantial peace, the provinces recovered considerably from the Portuguese misrule.[32] The Dutch, like the Portuguese, intended to establish Colombo as their capital city and chief military base in the island.[33] The Portuguese surrendered the city to the Dutch on 10th May 1656.[34] During their 138-year rule of the maritime provinces, of much smaller extent than the territory of their predecessors, they were involved in very few wars. Their aim was to live peacefully as far as they could and carry on their trading mission. However, the system of government and the economy as a whole remained more or less as before [35]

5 Kandyan Kingdom: *struggling for survival*

Almost a century after the arrival of the Portuguese, the Kandyan kingdom emerged in the central highlands of Ceylon.[36] This was the only Sinhalese kingdom to survive until it was finally subjugated by the British in 1815. While the Portuguese and the Dutch were keeping their grip on the maritime provinces, the Sinhalese kings ruled the most of hinterland. For much of the time there was a thorny relationship between the Sinhalese rulers and the coastal Europeans.[37]

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[31] Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Sri Lanka)*, Vol. xxxi (N. S.),1986/87,p. 54.

[32] Perera, A. B. *Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon*, The Ceylon Historical Journal, Vol. I, No. I, July, 1951, p. 47.

[33] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography*, p. 62.

[34] ibid., p. 58

[35] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon Today and Yesterday: Main Currents of Ceylon History*, pp. 57-58.

[36] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 18.

[37] The extent of the land belonging to the Kandyan kingdom varied over time. At the time of the British occupation of the maritime areas of the island, the Kandyan kingdom more or less consisted of North-Central Province, Central Province, Uva Province, Sabaragamuwa Province, Kurunegala District, Demala Hatpattu in Puttalam District, Bintenna Pattu in Batticaloa District, parts of Wewagam Pattu in Batticaloa District, Akkarai Pattu, certain villages in Kaddukulam Pattu in Trincomalee District, Yakawala

It is hardly possible to fit the changes in socio-economic phenomena into the framework of political periods, as mentioned earlier, since most of the political changes occur overnight, while social and economic changes are slow and protracted. In our discussion of the historical changes in consumption patterns in Ceylon, attention is paid to the sequence of changes rather than their chronological order Some of the earliest human behavioral patterns and related economic phenomena have seeped down into the modern or even post-modern periods in most societies. This was no exception in the case of Ceylon and some of the socio-economic features of ancient civilization still survive in the society.

6 Ceylonese Society: *not stationary*

Ceylon has been seen as an 'Oriental' or 'Asiatic' society with very definite characteristics, closely resembling India [38] 'The Oriental society seemed have three basic features: autocratic government; idolatrous religions; and entrenched social inequalities. These three characteristics put a peculiar stamp on the mind and outlook of the Ceylonese peoples'.[39] With reference to the social groupings in ancient Ceylon, it is said that most of settlements were villages or *gamas*.[40] The country's economy in ancient and mediaeval times was mainly agricultural and the village was its cornerstone.[41] Even in modern Ceylon, the village is the basic social grouping and it is considered as a rural settlement. As the village is normally the main center of social life, it is appropriate to examine the village as the social unit.[42] It seems

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in the Southern Province, and Vavuniya South Sinhalese division in the Northern Province See Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p 65

[38] Stephen's memorandum 30 June 1830, C O 323/47, f 198, Stephen's mem 10 Feb 1847, C O 323/63,f 362 cited in Barron, T 'Mr Mother Country and "Orientals" of Ceylon', *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, vol I, no 1 (New Series), January-June 1971, p 2

[39] Barron, T 'Mr Mother Country and "Orientals" of Ceylon', p 2

[40] Hettiaratchi, S B *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c, A D 300-1000)*, Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of London, 1974, p 416, in addition to common villages, there were large villages, seaport towns and cities in this period see ibid pp 416-417

[41] Gelbert, Michel *Chena (Shifting) Cultivation and Land Transformation in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka*, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, 1988. (Sri Lanka studies A Volume Published as a Ph D dissertation, submitted to the University of Zurich, Switzerland), p 50

[42] Hettiaratchi, S B *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c A D 300-1000)*, p 120

that the nuclear family system had become its most prevalent characteristic, although collective responsibility and co-operation of several nuclear families were the norm.[43] A family was generally surrounded by a host of other related families who helped each other in their time of need, sharing their joy and sorrow. This kinship system of the Sinhalese forms a very close parallel to the system amongst the Tamils.[44] The solidarity among members of ordinary families, who normally carried out similar occupations and lived in mono-clan villages, was considered of prime importance.[45] The village and the later household or *gedera*, and not the individual, was the owner of the lands.[46] Pre-colonial Sri Lankan society was stratified on the basis of kinship and caste.[47] Mendis explains the role of the individual in the traditional Ceylonese society, where caste and kinship played an important role.

> 'The caste system came to be gradually adopted during this [ancient] period. . Society in Ceylon was at first tribal With the spread of Hindu ideas, tribe gave way to caste. Like tribe, caste is based on kinship, and has the family and not the individual as its unit Individuals placed the interests of the family and of the caste before their own '[48]

The caste system naturally restricts social integration and confines the individual to a restricted horizon in his life span. However, it is argued that the caste system in Ceylon differs from that in the Indian sub-continent.

> ' the caste system of Sri Lanka differed from the Indian model Buddhism as the dominant religion tempered Sinhala caste system by depriving it of the religious rationale and sacred sanction of Hinduism the distinguishing feature of caste in Sri Lanka was its line with Sinhala feudalism Sinhala caste

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[43] ibid , pp 413-415

[44] Ariyapala, M B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon (The State of Society in Ceylon as depicted in the Saddharma-ratnávaliya and other Literature of the Thirteenth Century)*, Department of Cultural Affairs, Colombo, 1968, p. 307

[45] Hettiaratchi, S B *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c A.D 300-1000)*, pp 413-415.

[46] Gelbert, Michel *Chena (Shifting) Cultivation and Land Transformation in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka*, p 50, quotes Tambiah, H W *Sinhalese Laws and Customs*, Lake House Investment Ltd , Colombo, 1968, p 157

[47] Fernando, Tissa 'Aspects of Social Stratification', in Tissa Fernando and Robert N Kearney (eds), *Modern Sri Lanka A Society in Transition*, Foreign and Comparative studies South Asian Series, no 4, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracause University, New York, 1979, pp 29-31, makes reference to E R Leach, *Pul Eliya*, Cambridge University Press, 1961

[48] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 2

> denoted traditional service duties ... they were never occupational categories in any total sense ... in their ordinary life Goygama, Washerman and Drummers and the rest were all alike cultivators.'[49]

In provinces where the Tamil people lived, there might have been a highly stratified society based on the caste principle. For example, the caste system in Jaffna was close to the Indian system.[50] Whatever the version of caste system, it essentially determines the individual's place in the social ladder. There is no scope for the division of labor and specialization in accordance with economic rationalism. It is pointed out that women in the ancient Sinhalese society were by no means inferior to the men. Both could conclude a second marriage; no restrictions, no *sati* practice were imposed on widows; and women possessing land and other property were by no means rare.[51] This had not changed, even at the beginning of the British administration in the island.

> The natives of Ceylon are more continent with respect to women, than the other Asiatic nations; and their women are treated with much more attention. A Ceylonese woman almost never experiences the treatment of the slave, but is looked upon by her husband, more after the European manner, as a wife and a companion.'[52]

It is argued that the country had a fairly strong urban as well as non-agricultural population in the ancient period than under the Wet Zone civilization. A regression to the 'natural' economy in the Wet Zone kingdoms was accompanied by a smaller 'urban' population not engaged in primary agriculture than appears to have been the case in the ancient societies.[53] The origin of the modern urban centers on the island could be attributed to the expansion of the Wet Zone seaport settlements from the beginning of the 8th century. Colombo was transformed into an unrivalled commercial and urban center after the shifting of the Sinhalese kingdom to Kotte. It received a new lease of life to expand on modern urban lines with the arrival of European nations in the country.

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[49] Fernando, Tissa. 'Aspects of Social Stratification', pp. 29-31; makes reference to E. R. Leach, *Pul Eliya* . Cambridge University Press, 1961.

[50] ibid., p. 31.

[51] Hettiaratchi, S. B. *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c. A.D. 300-1000)*, pp. 415-416.

[52] Percival, Robert. *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, C and R Baldwin, London, 1803, p. 176.

[53] Pieris, Ralph. 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', *University of Colombo review*, vol. 1, no. 1, September, 1981, p. 62.

No society is ever static and totally unchanging; but, nevertheless, some changes are more important than others.[54] And traditional Ceylonese society was no exception in this respect. Rajaratnam says that very few changes took place in the ancient Sinhalese social and economic organization.[55] Hettiaratchi accepts that social conditions in Ceylon underwent certain changes during the later Anuradhapura period, particularly about the 7th century [56]

> 'The concept of traditional society is, however, in no sense static, and it would not exclude increase in output Acreage could be expanded; some *ad hoc* technical innovations, often highly productive innovations, could be introduced in trade, industry and agriculture, productivity could rise with, for example, the improvement of irrigation works or the discovery and diffusion of new crop But the central fact about the traditional society was that a ceiling existed on the level of attainable output per head '[57]

Transforming forces do not necessarily trigger out within a society itself and can be introduced by an external force. The contact with the Europeans who belonged to a transformed society would have been a contagious association.

The Europeans' influence on Ceylonese society was far-reaching. The Portuguese came to the island at the beginning of the 16th century, at first as merchants and later as rulers of the maritime provinces. They brought about certain social changes in the area under their control and, to a lesser extent, even outside; the influence of the Roman Catholicism had a great leveling effect The Portuguese intermarried with Sinhalese and Tamils, adopted their customs and foods, admitted them freely into their society and to the highest posts in the government and the army.[58] The gradual disappearance of the most galling practice of the caste system was another effect of the Portuguese influence.[59] As a result of these changes, many persons, including a section of the upper class, adopted Portuguese customs

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[54] Roxborough, Ian *Theories of Underdevelopment*, p 1

[55] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 1

[56] Hettiaratchi, S B *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c A D 300-1000)*,p 143

[57] Rostow, W W *The Stages of Economic Growth A Non-communist Manifesto*, p 4

[58] Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, p 52, and Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, (revised by Fr V Pemiola) The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd , Colombo, 1955, p 126

[59] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 126

and manners.[60] Their administration, however, was troubled by wars with native kings and they had little time to devote to the administration and the development of the economy. It is claimed that, during their regime, nothing important happened in Ceylonese society.

> '... if we examine the history of Ceylon from 1505 to 1658 we can hardly call it the Portuguese period. In the administrative sphere there was very little change. Apart from the emphasis placed on the export of spices, the economy of the Island underwent no serious modification. Though there was a certain amount of change in the social sphere, this too was limited to the areas over which the Portuguese directly ruled, thus this period is really a continuation of the history of the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms.'[61]

Both the Portuguese and the Dutch regimes were confined to a narrow coastal belt of the island and the hinterland remained under the Sinhalese kings. The political and economic penetration of the country under their rule (1505-1796) rarely extended farther inland than twenty or thirty miles from the western coast and this excludes the comparatively undeveloped, sparsely populated eastern part of the island, with its scanty rainfall.[62]

The Dutch, for their part, introduced law courts, codified Tamil customs and imposed Roman-Dutch law where Sinhalese and Tamil customs failed to meet the changing needs; they maintained Ceylon's contact with the west.[63] The Portuguese and the Dutch periods are considered as a continuation of the traditional Ceylonese administration in its dealings with consumption. Neither of these European peoples did very much to transform the existing pattern of consumption and the social order, although there were some changes in life style in the provinces under their rule. But these changes were mostly confined to the natives who happened to live close to or in the urban centers where immigrant Europeans lived. Imported consumer articles did not make a great impact either on native agriculture or crafts. Certainly, some changes occurred in the legal, religious and educational spheres, but these were not so important in comparison with the great transformation that took place during the British administration.

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[60] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon Today and Yesterday: Main Currents of Ceylon History*, p. 52.

[61] ibid., p. 56.

[62] Van Den Driesen, I. H. *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1954, p. 1.

[63] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 4.

When we consider the pre-British society of Ceylon as a whole, the individual's economic and social position was determined by birth, and marriage outside one's own caste was unusual. No opportunities were open to the individual during his lifetime for social mobility through his own action, as in a class society. There were few signs of the individual separating himself from the collectivity, of profound changes in the social structure or of money consciousness. The socio-economic background was not ripe enough to lead an individual to rational calculation, experimentation and mastery.

4

Consumption in the Pre-British Economy

The consumption of consumer goods and services in the country in the past has been broadly discussed here as food and beverages, non-foods, and auxiliary services. The first category includes all kinds of grains, vegetables and fruits, fish and meat, dairy products and beverages. Non-foods are mainly clothing, household utensils, education and health. Auxiliary services cover housing, trade and commerce and communication. It is not easy to draw a line between consumption and non-consumption and sometimes consumption and investment overlap each other. In order to confine ourselves to a manageable limit, we shall not enter into the consumption/investment debate on certain goods and services.

4.1 Food and Drink: *first needs of life*

In Ceylon, agriculture was directed from the earliest times primarily to cultivation, and there is incontrovertible proof in the ancient commentaries that this subsistence culture played an important part as a link between the rulers and the ruled, particularly in the early centuries of Sinhalese kingship.[1] Food and beverage consumption since ancient times has rotated around the native agriculture, although it has had ups and downs throughout its history.

4.1.1 Rice

Among all the foods and beverages, rice has long been the 'star' in Ceylon and the recorded history of rice consumption in the island goes back to the arrival of Prince Vijaya in the 6th century BC. 'When he[Prince Vijaya]

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[1] Brohier, R. L. *Discovering Ceylon*, p. 88.

said, "These men [his followers] are hungry," she[Princess Kuvani] showed them rice and other (foods) and goods of every kind that had been in the ships of those .. [Vijaya's] men prepared the rice and the condiments, and when they had first set them before the prince they all ate them.'[2] The rice was the principal article of diet in ancient times [3] Ptolemy gives rice first place in his list of production for which the island was famous at the beginning of the Christian era.[4] Every individual in society consumed rice, irrespective of the social strata they belonged to. It was the diet of the people of Lanka and the food of prince and monk, of the high in the land and the low [5] Rice was prepared in various ways, rice gruel, plain boiled rice, rice boiled in milk, rice and ghee, sweets made with honey and rice flour, cake made of rice flour fried in ghee [6]

Reference is made to many varieties of rice in the ancient periods [7] The one grown on the high land, *elvi,* was the most prized and of this the principal variety was *suvanda ratel,* scented red rice, while the rice grown on mud land was considered to be inferior [8] Scented red rice was used as a royal gift and semi-independent regional chiefs sent highly prized red scented rice to the king as gifts.[9] The basis of the economy in ancient Ceylon was paddy cultivation For the people rice was life, without rice, famine and death [10]

It is also maintained that the country produced enough rice for its population, which was much higher than today and was able to export a surplus to other countries in ancient periods.[11] Bertolacci makes the

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[2] *The Mahávamsa*, Wilhelm Geiger (trans), p 23

[3] de Silva, W A 'A Contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 72

[4] Wijesinhe, J E 'Agriculture - Past & Present', p 39, The earliest map of Ceylon which we possess is that of Ptolemy in the first century after Christ, see H W Codrington, *A Short History of Ceylon*, pp 3-5

[5] Brohier, R L *Discovering Ceylon*, p 88

[6] de Silva, W A 'A Contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 72-73

[7] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* Sangam Books Limited, London, 1987, p 49

[8] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 72-73

[9] ibid , p 67

[10] Elliott, Charles Brooke *The Real Ceylon*, H W Cave & Co , Colombo, 1938, p 61.

[11] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, makes reference to *Census report,* 1946 Vol I, p 53 and Mendis, G C *The Early History of Ceylon* p 105 Historians and writers on ancient

following comment on the ancient paddy cultivation and its relation to the larger population.

> 'We learn, from tradition, Ceylon possessed, in former times, a large population, and much higher state of cultivation, than it now[1817] enjoys. Although we have no data to fix, with any degree of certitude, the exact period of this prosperity, yet the fact is incontestable. The signs which have been left, and which we observe upon the island, lead us gradually back to the remotest antiquity.'[12]

Ariyapala has the opinion that Ceylon was undoubtedly self-sufficient in food in the past, and tradition has it that the island was known as the 'Granary of the East' and no mention is made of any dependence on, or importation of, foodstuffs from other countries.[13] Rajaratnam maintains that, until the end of the thirteenth century, Ceylon was agriculturally very prosperous and produced surplus grain and that the peasant groups had been organized into self-sufficient units around irrigation tanks.[14]

Contrary to the popular opinion that there was an excess production of rice over local needs, some authors argue that the country used to rely on foreign sources. For example, Perera forcefully argues that rice had been imported during the ancient periods.

> 'The writings of foreign travelers and geographers contain several references to the import of rice to Ceylon from South India. Unfortunately this type of literature does not go beyond the 8th or 9th century, and therefore it is not possible to state whether rice was imported before that time. But rice was certainly imported, long before the abandonment of Raja Rata with its wonderful system of artificial irrigation and its extensive paddy fields.'[15]

Ceylon conclude that the population in the ancient period was very much larger than the beginning of the 20th century. For example, Emerson Tennent in his 'Ceylon. An Account of the Island Physical, Historical and Topographical Volume I' estimates the population to have been at least 17 million, while Ponnambalam Arunachalam in the Census Report for 1901 states that 10 million can hardly be deemed to be an extravagant estimate. N. K. Sarkar wrote in his 'Demography of Ceylon' that it would not have exceeded 8.47 million. See: Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p. 52.

12 Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p. 6.

13 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 314; in his analysis, the author bases himself roughly on the thirteenth century A.D.

14 Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. v.

15 Perera, B. J. The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: II- Ancient

Even if rice was imported, it could not have been in large quantities. The ancient shipping and transport essentially encouraged the trade of light and expensive articles or easily movable animals such as horses, cattle and elephants rather than bulky low valued commodities.

Even in the mediaeval period rice continued to be the staple food, although the literary works of the period refer to many other dry grains.[16] People were also in the habit of taking rice for their breakfast.[17] The following account of Ariyapala describes the constitution of the mediaeval diet in the country.

> 'Cooked rice was eaten with various kinds of cooked meat and vegetable. Various kinds of sweets, especially those made of rice flour, were delicacies. ... a great many varieties of dishes of fish...All the people had not the good fortune to partake of the same kind of food, which, as all else, depended on the economic position of the individual. A poor man's meal is at times referred to as consisting of cooked, unpolished rice ...and a kind of common river-fish ...'[18]

We have also travelers' records to provide an uneven impression of rice production and consumption in the mediaeval period. One of them was Marco Polo, a Venetian. He gives the following exposé, when he touched Ceylon on his way to Persia from China in 1293. 'They have no grain besides rice and sesame of which latter they make oil.'[19] A similar account is given by Ma Hean, who had visited to Ceylon in 1415.[20] Ibn Batuta, on his way to Adam's Peak, which is in the central hilly part of the country, while passing through a small city had a meal supplied by the people there. He gives the following description of the food he enjoyed in 1344.

> '...the people of which [Menar Mendely ?] treated us to an excellent repast. This consisted of young buffaloes, taken in chase in the neighbouring forest and brought alive, rice, melted butter, fish, chicken and milk.'[21]

Ceylon and its Trade with India, *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January, 1952, p. 201.

16 de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p.100 and Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 314.

17 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 315.

18 ibid., p. 314.

19 Hulugalle, H. A. J. *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, I. G. M. Limited, Colombo, 1980, p. 32.

20 Ma Hean, a Chinese Muslim attached to the staff as an interpreter to the Chinese admiral Ching Ho, on his third visit to Ceylon in 1415 AD: Quoted ibid., pp. 60-61.

21 Ibn Batuta, a Moor from Tangier, visited Ceylon in 1344; quoted ibid., p. 48; Ibn

As a rule, the food of the poorer cultivators must have been simple fare [22] They no doubt long formed the great majority of the population of the country Robert Knox gave the following account of the diet of the country, which he witnessed during the period 1660-1680

> Their Dyet an ordinary fare, is but very mean, as to our account If they have but Rice and Salt in their house, they reckon they want for nothing For with a few green Leaves and juice of a Lemon with Pepper and Salt, they will make hearty meal Beef here may not be eaten, it is abominable Flesh and Fish is somewhat scarce And that little of it they have, they had rather sell to get money to keep, than eat it themselves neither is there any but outlandish men, that will buy any of them It is they indeed do eat the fat and best of the Land [23]

He further explains the constitution of the diet of upper class

> The great ones have always five or six sorts of food at one meal, and of them not above one or two at most of Flesh or Fish, and of them more pottage than meat, after the Portugal fashion The rest is only what groweth out of the ground The main substance with which they fill their bellies is Rice, the other things are but to give it a relish '[24]

Batuta gives a similar account of the diet of the Maldives, where he lived for 18 years The dinner 'consists of rice, chicken, melted butter, fish, salt, sun-dried meat, and cooked bananas After eating they drink the coconut honey mingled with aromatics, which facilitates digestion ' ibid p 45

[22] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 50

[23] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd , Dehiwala, Sri Lanka ,1981, p 236, Robert Knox (1660-1680) was taken prisoner by the men of the Sinhalese king while he was on shore with another fourteen people, including his father, after their ship had dropped anchor in Trincomalee harbor, eastern Ceylon, after being damaged in a storm He lived as a open prisoner of the Kandyan kingdom in north-western Ceylon, his farther died nearly one year after the captivity Knox's book '*An Historical Relation of Ceylon*' written with the help of his cousin, Rev John Strype, after his return to England was first published in 1681 The book was an immediate success and Dutch, German and French translations soon followed Knox lived in the Kandyan kingdom for nearly twenty years as a villager He built himself a modest house and cultivated a garden, ate the food of the country and peddled knitted caps for a living He lent paddy to his fellow villagers at 50 percent interest [annually ?] He also raised chickens, goats and pigs His companions in captivity distilled arrack and ran taverns He spoke Sinhalese fluently and when the time came for him to set down his impressions, he was able to paint a faithful picture of the country and the people among whom he lived Knox had no racial prejudice See Hulugalle, H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, pp 106-107

[24] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 236, Marshall describes how people ate and drank in Ceylon in the Kandyan kingdom 'The men always eat alone,

Henry Marshall gives the following description of a Kandyan soldier's provisions, thus painting a clear picture what the people of the Kandyan kingdom consumed during the reign of the Sinhalese king. It also reveals the regional differences in the consumption pattern.

> '... each follower or soldier being provided with a musket and fifteen days' provision, together with a small earthen vessel (a chatty) for the purpose of dressing rice, &c. On the eastern side of the island, the followers were frequently armed with bow and arrows. A few cakes made of natchenny meal, a small quantity of rice, and a few coconuts, composed the whole of a Kandyan soldier's stock for a campaign of fifteen days. At the end of this period, the army was recruited by a new levy from the population.'[25]

Rice was used not only as a staple diet, but rice flour was used for making many kinds of sweets as well. Ariyapala says that most of the sweetmeats were made of rice flour.[26] Knox explains what people made from rice, although this is not different from the current practices of the country.

> 'They have several sorts of sweet-meats. One they call Caown. ... Oggulas another sort of sweet-meats....Alloways...'[27]

The kingdom of Kotte, which the Portuguese first contacted, is reported to have imported rice.[28] The Kotte kingdom and certain other parts of the country fell under Portuguese rule some time later. It is maintained that the Portuguese had no real interest in rice production.[29] They had totally neglected all the improvements in agriculture, and particularly those of the

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and the mother and children in a separate apartment. They sit on a mat on the floor, and eat with their fingers of plantain leaves; the people of distinction have saucers to hold their numerous curries. All ranks avoid touching the vessel with their lips while drinking. For pouring liquid into their mouths, they have an earthen vessel resembling our tea pot.' See: Marshall, Henry, M. D. 'Ceylon: A General Description of the Island and of its Inhabitants-Complete unabridged from the original edition of 1846', *The Ceylon Historical Journal Volume Fifteen*, Tisara Prakasakayo, Dehiwala, Ceylon, 1969, p. 18; The author served as a surgeon to 1st and 2nd Ceylon Regiments from 1809 to 1821.

[25] Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p. 23; the ancient weapons used in Ceylon mainly were sword and bow. In addition, references are made to lances and spears. See Parker, H. *Ancient Ceylon*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 523-561.

[26] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 317.

[27] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1981, p. 238.

[28] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, Urban Rural Mission-Christian Conference of Asia, 1980, p. 39.

[29] ibid., p. 39

country's first necessity.[30] This was largely because of the wars with the Kandyan kingdom over the rights of collection of cinnamon in the jungles separating the territories.[31] Thus during the Portuguese administration there was no economic improvement of the country, because of the many wars.[32] When the Portuguese controlled the most of maritime regions of the country, the Kandyans used to exchange their areca nut, cinnamon and elephants for rice, saltpetre and cloth from south India at Chilaw, a north-western seaport of Ceylon [33]

During the Dutch rule a number of measures were taken to develop the staple food production in general and rice, in particular, in the maritime provinces [34]

> The Dutch paid much attention to cultivation of paddy Already in 1766 a regulation was issued threatening the confiscation of the fields if these were left uncultivated Since many lands were depopulated, the Company imported slaves from Tanjore, branded them with the Company's mark and set them to cultivate the fertile lands, promising them their liberty if they acquitted themselves creditably '[35]

The number of slaves were settled in the lands around Colombo for the cultivation of rice was 2000.[36] This seems to have done to procure rice for the inhabitants of the city of Colombo at a cheap rate. They also repaired some of the tanks to help the cultivation of paddy.[37] The Dutch had made

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[30] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 15

[31] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 2

[32] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 127

[33] de Silva, Chandra Richard *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, H W Cave & Company, Colombo, Ceylon, 1972, p 135

[34] When the Dutch first came to Colombo, a rice-based sweet called *kaum* or oil cake was sent to them by the king of the Kotte kingdom It is very similar to the Dutch *Oliebollen* and prepared only to celebrate special occasions such as the new year. Robert Knox reports the event, 'They have several sorts of sweet-meets One they call Caown When the Dutch came first to Columba, the king ordered these Caown to be made and sent to them as a royal Treat And they say, the Dutch did so admire them, that they asked if they grew not upon Trees, supposing it past the Art of man to make such dainties ' see· Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 238.

[35] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 189

[36] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 65

[37] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 4

attempts to revive rice production, but they too had imported about 600 tons annually towards the later part of the 18th century [38]

The Dutch encouraged people to cultivate their gardens with commercial crops such as coffee, pepper, cardamom, areca nut and coconut and they started cinnamon plantations instead of depending entirely on cinnamon grown in the wild.[39] Up to this time the people of Ceylon produced crops mainly for consumption, but the Dutch encouraged them to cultivate crops for sale and thereby developed the trade within the island [40]

Wijesinhe admits that '... the Dutch, who were more peacefully inclined and, being a nation of traders, were favourable to the development of the Island's products.' he continues ' ...if their rule had continued, it would have brought agriculture into a very satisfactory condition in their own interest if no other.'[41] However, there are counter arguments regarding the food production policies of the Dutch administration. It is argued that, under Dutch rule, the production of the country's staple foods was neglected, although all the necessary conditions were present to produce sufficient food within the country [42] It seems true that the Dutch company was not engaged in humanitarian works in Ceylon.

Among all the food production and consumption of the country, rice is the most important. The country's civilization since its antiquity has been centered around rice culture. The following account summarizes the importance of the paddy and its relation to the basic social grouping, the 'village.'

> Thus the paddy production was the pivot round which the economic and cultural life of the village revolved The vital social values and relationships stemmed from this central activity of paddy cultivation and in turn supported the continuation of this economy A well-integrated and self-sufficient social and economic system, well adapted to certain ecological factors, evolved '[43]

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[38] Dawood, Nawaz *Tea and Poverty Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p 39

[39] Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, pp 57-58

[40] ibid , p 63

[41] Wijesinhe, J E Agriculture-Past & Present, p 40

[42] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, pp 561-62

[43] Sarkar, N K and Tambiah, S J *The Disintegrating Village Report of a Socio-Economic Survey Conducted by the University of Ceylon*, Part I, p x

4.1.2 Other Grains

In addition to rice, a number of other grains have been cultivated in the country since early times. The varieties of these food articles included fine grain, various kinds of beans and gram pulses [44] Most of these seem to have been cultivated under *chena* or slash and burn. The shifting of the kingdom to the Wet Zone and the decay of the ancient artificial irrigation system restricted the amount of land available for paddy cultivation. This led people to depend increasingly on slash and burn cultivation. Ariyapala makes the following comment on the *chena* cultivation a few decades after the shifting of Sinhalese kingdom to the Wet Zone of the country.

> 'Mention must be made of chena cultivation, which seems to have been widely carried on towards the end of the twelfth century If, as Nissanka Malla's inscription denote, chena cultivation was so widespread, we have no doubt that the thirteenth century saw the continuance this type of cultivation '[45]

Knox makes the following reference to a fine grain called *tanna,* cultivated in chena. He certainly would have had proper knowledge of all the main grains cultivated in the country where he lived for nearly twenty years as an open prisoner.

> 'There is another Corn called Tanna, it is much eaten in the Northern Parts, in Cande Uda but little sown yields a far greater encrease From one grain may spring up two, three four of five stalks, according as the ground is, one each stalk one ear, that contains thousands of grains I think it gives the greatest encrease of any one seed in the world '[46]

Knox also makes reference to foods dressed from grains cultivated in *chena*, a kind of pudding called Pittu, made from the flour of kurakkan.[47] Changes also took place in the diet after the shifting of hydraulic civilization

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[44] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 73 and de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* p. 49

[45] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 334

[46] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon,* p. 112, Tanna or tana hal is orange colored grain about 2mm long with a taper at both ends See Wikramanayake, T W *Food and Nutrition*, HKARTI, Colombo, 1996, p 158

[47] ibid , p 238

> The shift to the south-west did, of course, lead to some change in the diet; notably, sesame oil was replaced by coconut oil. Coconut had been known even in the days of the Anuradhapura kingdom, but with the settlement of the south-west it came to be extensively cultivated ...'[48]

4.1.3 Meat and Fish

In the ancient periods meat and honey were collected from the forest, fish from tanks and rivers as well as from the sea.[49] References are made to fowl, peacock flesh, hare, venison, boars' flesh, peacocks' flesh fried in scented ghee, boars' flesh cooked with the addition of honey or jaggery and various kinds of flesh cooked in five different ways.[50] There were also *Dabim* or game preserves and *Vanantar* or forests.[51] Game seems to have been the main source of meat supply for consumption. In ancient Ceylon reservoirs, irrigation channels or sheets of water were held to be owned by individuals. The fish they contained was considered to be the property of that individual, and any other person appropriating such fish by whatever means was liable to be held as having committed theft.[52] Most of tanks and channels did not belong to individuals, but to the king. The king received some income from a tax on fish caught in tanks and rivers.[53] These tanks were the larger ones built under royal patronage. Fish and meat entered the diet from time to time,[54] but they were not consumed on a regular basis, at least by the masses. In the mediaeval period, statements are made that meat of various kinds formed the dishes of the people and some people always had a meat dish, even though there were many other dishes.[55] Marco Polo says that their food is milk, rice and flesh.[56] It was reported that the hunting and killing of animals for food were carried on with the help of dogs and the chief equipment of a hunter were the bow and arrow, traps,

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48 de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p. 100.

49 ibid., p. 50.

50 de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 73.

51 ibid., p. 64.

52 Brohier, R. L. *Food and the People*, p. 20; makes reference to Paranavithana and *Samantapasadika*.

53 de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka: A History*, pp. 51-52.

54 ibid., p. 50.

55 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp. 314, 340.

56 Hulugalle, H. A. J. *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p. 32.

and nets.[57] Again, in the Middle Ages as in the ancient times, the source of supply of meat was game. This is further confirmed by Ibn Batuta's travel records. In addition to game, animals were said to be kept on a limited scale for food. Ariyapala mentions the rearing of cattle, goats, pigs, and poultry for meat.[58] People in the seventeenth century kept poultry, but did not pay attention to feeding them. 'The People in this Land never feed their Poultry. But they feed upon these Ants...'[59] Here Knox mentions certain kind of ants and gives reasons why people were not interested in keeping their poultry and cattle properly.

> 'If these people were not discouraged from rearing and nourishing of Cattle and Poultry, provisions might be far more plentiful. For here are many jackalls, which catch their Hens; and some Tigers, that destroy their Cattle: but the greatest of all is the King; whose endeavour is to keep them poor and in want. For from them that have Hens his Officers take them for the Kings use giving little or nothing for them; the like they do by Hogs, Goats none are suffered to keep, besides the King, except strangers.'[60]

Only fishing in rivers is mentioned in the literature, in addition to the pearl fisheries in the mediaeval period.[61] However, there must have been at least limited sea fishing in this period, as in ancient Ceylon. Edmund Pieris says that, under the Sinhalese kings, the levy on fish was more in the nature of a tribute than of a rent or tax. It consisted of dried fish, *kacci or* bales of clothes and money, and the Indian fishermen who fished in Ceylon waters paid a levy in money.[62] It can therefore be safely assumed that there had been limited sea fishing under the Sinhalese kings. According to Knox, fish was not an important item of the diet of people in the second half of the seventeenth century and seemingly they were not interested in consuming it regularly.

> 'They have no want of Fish, and those good ones too. All little Rivers and Streams running thro the Valley are full of small Fish, but the Boys and others wanting somewhat to eat with their Rice do, continually catch them before they come to maturity: and all their Ponds are full of them, which in dry weather drying up, the people catch multitudes of them in this manner.'[63]

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[57] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 340.
[58] ibid., p. 336.
[59] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1981, p. 133.
[60] ibid., p. 236.
[61] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 336.
[62] Pieris, Edmund. 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1&2, July -October, 1952, p. 58.
[63] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp. 141-142.

As games, natives had a smart way of catching fish suited to their living environment. The Sinhalese had several ingenious ways of catching fish in wired and staked enclosures formed on the principle of the eel traps used in England, and they also intoxicated fish with various poisonous drugs.[64]

Levy on fishing: 'The Portuguese improved on the existing arrangement [Sinhalese Kings'] by introducing a system of rents with headmen to supervise it... The Dutch continued to levy the tax as 'shore dues' ... The yield was 'not inconsiderable' in value and together with renting of the various fish market amounted to 4,000 or 5000 larins ... the Dutch Government permitted them [fishermen] to cut *jak* and *del* trees for their boats, without the payment of duty.'[65]

4.1.4 Vegetables and Fruit

In ancient times people consumed vegetables and fruit.[66] The early Sinhalese are known to have extracted edible oil from sesame.[67] Coconut gardens are also mentioned from early times, but the extent of coconut cultivation and whether it played as vital part in the life of the villagers in the Wet Zone as it did in later times cannot be determined.[68] Ferguson maintains that the Sinhalese people did not much want to extend the cultivation of the coconut palm beyond what might be needed for the supply of their own families and there was no special object or inducement to do so, and there is no evidence to show that the nuts, oil or arrack were

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[64] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon: A General Description of the Island, Historical, Physical, Statistical*, Vol. II. Champion and Hall, London, 1876, p. 265.

[65] Pieris, Edmund. 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p. 59; Makes reference to Petition of Galkissa Fishermen, 27 Oct. 1832.

[66] de Silva, W. A. A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times, p. 73 and de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p. 50.

[67] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, Sangam Books Limited, London, 1987, p. 49.

[68] ibid., p. 49; Unlike cinnamon, the coconut palm is not indigenous to Ceylon. De Candolle considers its origin to be the Eastern Archipelago, somewhere in Sumatra and Java, from where nuts floated both eastwards and westwards to the islands of the Pacific and the coast of Central America, Ceylon, India and the east coast of Africa. The introduction of coconut to Ceylon, India and China does not date back beyond 3,000 years. The *Mahawamsa* does not contain nearly so many references to the coconut as it does to the palmyra palm; see: Ferguson, John. 'The Coconut Palm in Ceylon', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* , vol. IX, No. 57, 1906 pp. 40, 42-43, 46.

exported much before the end of the 15th century [69] People seem to have been fond of vegetables and fruit and the following are mentioned, among others, bread fruit, jak fruit, grapes and vine [70]

Knox presents an array of fruits, some grown in the wild, some in gardens, including orange, lime, mango, pineapple, water melon, pomegranate, grapes, both black and white, bananas, coconuts, dongs (similar to black cherries), murros, ambelo (like barberries), carolla, caballa and also many kinds of yams, grown both in gardens and the wild [71]

> 'OF fruits there are great plenty and variety, and far more might be if they did esteem or nourish them Pleasant Fruits to eat ripe they care not at all to do, They look only after those that may fill the Belly, and satisfie their hunger when their Corn is spent, or to make it go the further . They have all Fruits that grow in India Most sort of these delicious Fruits they gather before they be ripe, and boyl them to make Carrees, to use the Portuguez word, that is somewhat to eat with and relish their rice '[72]

Knox says of the seasonal fruit, jak, which is still an important food article among the people.

> There is another Fruit, which we call Jacks, the Inhabitants when they are young call them Polos, before they be full ripe Cose, and when ripe, Warracha or Vellas, But with this difference, the Warracha is hard, but the Vellas as soft as pap, both looking alike to the eye no difference, but they are distinct Trees These are great help to the People, and a great part of their Food They grow upon a large Tree, the Fruit is as big as a good Peck loaf They usually gather them before they be fully ripe, boring an hole in them, and feeling of the Kernal, they know if they be ripe enough for their purpose. Then being cut in pieces they boil them, and eat to save Rice and fill their Bellies, they eat them as we would do Turnips or Cabbage, and tast and smell much like the latter one may suffice six or seven men When they are ripe they are sweet and good to eat raw The kernels do very much resemble Chestnuts both in colour and tast, and are almost as good the poor people will boyl them or rost them in the embers, there being usually a good heap of them lying in a corner by the fire side, and when they go a Journey, they will put them in bags for their Provisions by the way One Jack may contain three pints or two quarters of these seeds or kernels '[73]

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[69] Ferguson, John 'The Coconut Palm in Ceylon', pp 54-55

[70] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 315-319

[71] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp 117, 123-124

[72] ibid , p 113

[73] ibid , pp 115-116

At times people consume jack fruit as a main item of diet when it is available in plenty during the season. People even had the traditional methods of preserving seeds and kernel for the off-season. Knox makes reference to many kinds of other plants and vegetables consumed in the seventeenth century. Some of the European vegetables seem to have been grown in the country well before the British.

> 'For Herbs to boyl and eat with Butter they have excellent good ones, and several sorts; some of them ... being boyled almost as good as Asparagus. ... They have several other sorts of Fruits which they dress and eat with their Rice, and very savoury ... can not compare to any things that grow here in England. They have of our English Herbs and plants, Colworts, Carrots, Radishes, Fennel, Balsam, Spearmint, Mustard. ...They have also Fern , Indian Corn, several sorts of Beans as good as these in England: right Cucumbers, Calabasses, and several sorts of Pumpkins...'[74]

In his Revenue Administration Report for 1901, the Government Agent of the North-Central Province quotes Mr. Levers' report for the year 1900 for the same province to mention some of foods received from the tanks and forests. It is reasonable to assume that these foods had been used since ancient times.

> 'Besides fish, the tanks supply a considerable variety of vegetable food, which I have personally tried and appreciate. The stalks of small kind of lotus called "olupity" are boiled and eaten in curry. The fruit yields seeds called "tank rice" ("olu-hal"). The seeds and buds of the lotus are edible, the former ("nelunbatu") are eaten both raw and cooked, the latter ("dalu") raw. The kernel of the caltharp ("vilagas"), a herb which grows in tanks, is excellent, and is largely eaten boiled or roast. The nut is bat-shaped with two or three sharp thorns, hence its name (calcitrapa bispiona) The forests yield yams of numerous kinds, and honey, which is diligently sought and divided, when found, according to ancient custom. They also supply a number of fruits for food, and almost innumerable kinds of pungent leaves, which are used to flavour curries.'[75]

In the economic sphere the Portuguese can be credited only with the introduction of chilies, tobacco, and a number foreign fruit trees.[76] The Dutch government attempted to cultivate cocoa and coconut and the entire

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[74] ibid., pp. 124-125.

[75] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO: 57/147/1901.

[76] Perera, A B. 'Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon', p.47; makes reference to Codrington, *A Short History of Ceylon*, p. 125.

south-western seaboard was planted with coconut palm [77] They introduced manioc and cultivated sugar cane in plantations.[78] In the later stages some people consumed manioc as a main item of diet when rice was scarce in the country, although it is considered inferior to rice.

4.1.5 Dairy Products

Apart from providing draught power for ploughing, threshing and other agricultural activities, the cattle and buffaloes furnished diary products, of which milk, *ghee* and curd formed significant elements of diet.[79] The milking of cows and the preparation of the ghee were in the hands of women [80] There were special villages called *Gopalugam* occupied by herdsmen and separate pasture grounds called *Anabim* [81] Cattle-owners seem to have entrusted their flocks to herdsmen employed by them [82] These provisions might have been made in order to maintain the quality of dairy production. The penalty for killing oxen in temple villages was death and cattle thieves were branded under the armpits [83] This may have been the common practice for other places in the country, although information is available only for the temple villages. Dairy products - curds and butter - were served in the monastery refectory [84] The people also seem to have been fond of milk and milk products.[85] Travelers' records also provide information about dairy products. Ibn Batuta mentions melted butter and milk.[86] Knox says people in the country had the habit of making butter.[87]

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[77] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp 3-4

[78] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 189, Sugar cane was cultivated on the bank of the Kalu ganga under the superintendence of a captain of the Luxembourg regiment whose father had sugar plantations in America Colonel de Meuron likewise planted sugar cane between Colombo and Galkissa

[79] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, pp 50, 100

[80] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 72

[81] ibid , p 64

[82] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 336

[83] Codrington, H W *A Short History of Ceylon*, p 44

[84] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 315, makes reference to Epigraphia Zeylanica 3 4 178, commenting on this Paranavithana says ' it was customary to supply the monks with the richest available food ' ibid 315

[85] ibid , p 314

[86] Ibn Batuta, quoted in Hulugalle, H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p 48

4.1.6 Beverages

Intoxicating beverages have a long history in the island Even in the early days of the civilization they were consumed both by the ordinary people and by high ranking people Alcoholic drinks were part of the feasts and were offered to royal officials when they visited the villages On some occasions, when the King's officers visited the villages, they were provided with special lodging and foods - rice, ghee and variety of curries, on other occasions they were provided with toddy At some feasts toddy was drunk [88]

The consumption of intoxicating beverages is said to have become widespread among all the social strata, and not only men, but also women had the habit of consuming intoxicants and they were available in taverns as well as illegally

> toddy, which was perhaps the only intoxicant known other than *madu* Toddy seems to have been sold at the taverns, and may have been consumed on a large scale it was not only the drink of the common man , but that even kings partook of it and got drunk high-class toddy in *madu* (mead), which the king and ladies all drank until they became intoxicated toddy was quite common drink in the villages, but also that an illicit trade on toddy was going on [89]

The intoxicants consumed in these days were mainly fermented juice drawn from palm trees Palmyra, coconut and ketul were the three main palm trees used for this purpose Knox makes the following reference to liquor drawn from the Ketul tree [90]

> The next tree is Kettule It yieldeth a sort of Liquor, which they call Tellegie it is rarely sweet and pleasing to the Pallate, and as wholesome to the Body, but no stronger than water They take it down from the Tree twice, and from some good Trees thrice, in a day An ordinary Tree will yield some three, some four Gallons in a day, some more and some less [91]

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[87] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* ,pp 253-254

[88] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 66 67, 76

[89] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 318-319

[90] *Kitul* is sometime referred as jaggery palm The scientific name is *caryola ureus* see Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, London, 1883, p 48

[91] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 118

This is further established by travelers' reports. Marco Polo, (1293) states '... they drink the wine drawn from trees ...'[92] Ma Hean (1415) refers to coconut wine[93]

However, drunkenness had been considered as nasty habit of the society and seems to have never been encouraged or tolerated as a socially justifiable practice. So Ariyapal's comments on drunkenness appear to refer to isolated exceptional cases rather than to the general practice in the country.

> 'Drunkenness they do greatly abhor, neither are their many that do give themselves to it Tobacco likewise they account a Vice, but yet is used both by Men and Women, but more eaten than drunk in pipes '[94]

Both used the term 'wine' rather than 'toddy', since the former seems familiar to them. The common drink of the people seems have been water.

> 'Their common drink is only water and if they drink Rack, it is before they eat, that it may have the more operation upon their bodies When they drink they touch not the Pot with their mouths, but hold it at distance, and pour it in '[95]

Chewing of betel was also a widespread habit on the island[96] It is constantly referred to in the literature of the period. Chewing betel after a meal was a common practice.[97] Traveler Ma Hean says 'betel nut never quits their mouths.'[98] The chewing of areca nut with betel leaves was a social custom among the people of Ceylon and South India[99]

Travelers' reports give the impression that, at the beginning of the 15th century, people of the country had a sufficient quantity of food and drink. Ma Hean (1415) gave the following account.

> 'The people have in abundance the necessary of life .They have no wheat but have rice, sesame and peas The coconut which they have in abundance, furnishes oil, wine, sugar and food Among their first fruit are bananas and

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[92] Hulugalle, H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p 32

[93] Ma Hean, Quoted in Hulugalle, H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, pp 60-61

[94] ibid , p 259

[95] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* , p 237

[96] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 319

[97] ibid , p 319

[98] Ma Hean, Quoted in Hulugalle, H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p 60

[99] de Silva, Chandra Richard *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, p 207; the author makes reference to S Arasaratnam, 146

> jack, they have sugar cane, melon, herbs and garden plants Cattle, sheep, paultry and ducks are not wanting The king has in circulation coinage They value Chinese musk, coloured taffetas, blue porcelain basins and cups, copper, money and camphor, which they exchange for pearl and precious stones '[100]

4.1.7 Other Foods

In ancient times honey and sugar from sugar cane were in use among the people [101] Here cane sugar seems to have been coarse sugar or cane jaggery like as many other kinds of jaggery produced during this period from the sap of palm trees.102 Knox explains the making of coarse sugar from the sap of a palm tree called Ketul.

> 'The which liquor they boyl and make a kind of brown Sugar, called jaggery; but if they will use their skill, they can make it as white as the second best Sugar, and for any use it is but little inferior to ordinary Sugar '[103]

Jaggery or coarse sugar was one of the articles exported from the Kandyan kingdom to the maritime provinces [104] Another palm tree called talipot was useful to the natives in many ways, such as for making umbrellas, thatching and erecting their huts etc. In addition, an edible flour was made from pith of the tree

> 'This tree [talipot] is within a Pith only, which is very good to eat if they cut Tree down before it runs to seed They bear it in Mortars to Flower, and bake Cakes of it, which tast much like to white bread It serves them instead of Corn before their Harvest be ripe '[105]

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[100] Ma Hean, Quoted in Hulugalle, H. A J. *Ceylon of the Early Travelers,* pp 60-61.

[101] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 73 and de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka· A History,* , p 50

102 A sugar mill for the expressing of the juice from cane existed in the 1st century BC in the Seven Korale, the North Western part of the Island Tennet, Sir James Emerson(1859) *Ceylon,* vol I, Longman, London, 1860, p 455 Makes reference to *Mahavanso,* pp 163, 192, 208

[103] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon,* , 1981, p 118

[104] Marshall, Henry, M D 'Ceylon, p 20

[105] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon,* pp 117-118

4.1.8 Famines

References are made to the famines experienced by the island since very early times. The great famine that occurred in the first century of the Christian era was the *beminitiyasaya.*[106] Natural causes and dragging civil unrest and wars may have been the cause of the famines. Food seems not to have been available from foreign sources or there was not a habit of importing food from foreign countries. When people were unable to obtain grain during famines they lived on roots and leaves found in the forest. *Katuala*, (Dioscorea) is mentioned as the principal variety of root thus used and the leaves of the *kara* tree (canthium) are mentioned as the best sought for leaf.[107] The hill country is mentioned as wild uninhabited forest, where people took refuge during wars and famines and lived on forest produce.[108] '... except in the royal stores and in the small domestic barns (*bihi*) there were insufficient 'buffer stocks' to prevent famine in time of scarcity'[109] Besides wild leaves, roots and fruits, game was an important source of food during the time of scarcity.

4.2 Non-foods: *wants in a civilized world*

4.2.1 Cloths

The most important consumer article next to the foods and beverages was cloth. Cloth is given a high priority in a civilized society not only in the sphere of consumption, but also in production. The raw material used for cloth production, at least in early times, was fiber from the fauna and flora, both of which had a close link with agriculture and livestock. Although there are no accurate statistics, it would be safe to assume that cloth was one of the most important single items in income and employment generation in a pre-industrial society.

When Vijaya and his men came to Ceylon, Kuveni was spinning seated under a tree.[110] If this story is true, the primitive inhabitants in Ceylon

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[106] de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 63.

[107] ibid., p. 72.

[108] ibid., p. 63.

[109] Pieris, Ralph. 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p. 64.

[110] *The Mahávamsa*, Wilhelm Geiger (trans.), p. 56.

would have had a knowledge of weaving before they made contact with the advanced society of Bengal. If not, this incident may have been introduced into his narrative by Mahanama, author of the *Mahawamsa*, to dramatize the meeting of Prince Vijaya and Princess Kuveni [111] On their arrival these Indian immigrants would have worn some sort of cloth. It is admitted that the use of bark cloth by the Sinhalese is never mentioned in legends or history [112]

The industry of weaving and spinning was undoubtedly carried on in Ceylon from the earliest times.[113] Materials used for making cloth seem to have been silks of various kinds, silk from China and Sumatra, fibers from trees, cotton, goat hair, and Benaris silk [114] The weavers were therefore skilled in weaving various kinds of fibers.

Needles and looms were used in weaving and spinning [115] The origin of the cotton spinning wheel, *Kapu Katina Yantra,* and cotton gin, *Kapu Kapana Yantra,* is doubtless much more recent; there is nothing to show the date of their introduction into Ceylon; early spinning would have been done by hand like that of the Kinnaras at the present day, by means of a whorl fitted on a wooden pin, which was replaced at a later date by an iron one [116] A primitive loom is employed in Ceylon for weaving cotton cloths: when using it the weaver sits on the ground with his feet in a hole [117]

Ordinary cotton weaving was practiced in the island from the earliest times by the caste known as *beraváyó*, who are today mainly tom-tom beaters or drummers.[118] This is confirmed by Parker.

> 'Although some cloth weaving was done by Potters, the principal weavers who worked for hire were men of the Berawa caste, the present tom-tom beaters, to whom the people of better castes were accustomed to hand their yarn for the purpose Coloured clothes of various interlacing patterns, as well as white cloth, were made in the villages by these people.'[119]

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111 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon,* Vol II, p. 37

112 Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon,* M D Gunasena & Co Ltd., Colombo, 1965, p 116.

113 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon,* p 338

114 ibid , p 324

115 ibid , p 338

116 Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon,* pp 562-563

117 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon,* p 37.

118 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon,* pp 337-338, makes reference to A K Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art,* Kelmscott, Essex House Press, 1908

119 Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon,* p 565

The making of valuable and fine cloths was carried out by people belong to other castes. For example, *châliyás* or *salágamayó* were brought over from South India to make fine, gold-woven cloth.[120] Artisans were brought from India specially for this purpose when skilled weavers were not available in the island. When Vijayabáhu came to the throne in about AD 1232 the art of making fine cloth was almost dying out and he had to revive it by bringing weavers from India.[121] Eight master weavers were brought in by the king on this occasion and they were given villages, wives and honors.

Textiles were one of the major items imported since very early times, the major importing sources were India and China. One of the earliest references to the import of Chinese cloth to Ceylon is found in the *Culavamsa,* which stated that King Parakramabahu I (1153-1186) adorned the *sarasvatimandapaya* with Chinese stuffs and other materials.[122] However, the imported cloths were mostly luxury varieties for royalty and the upper classes [123]

Perera argues that the South India had a much greater influence on the cloth of the country. Not only the article was imported from that source, but the etymological influence as well.

> 'Cloth was another import from South India The very word (*redi*) appears to be a word of Dravidian origin This word which means a coarse cotton cloth is used in Sinhalese to designate cloth in general The word (*redda*) which in Sinhalese is the name for lace, is also a word of Dravidian origin indicating that they were originally imported from South India '[124]

Among other hand woven textiles, wall hangings confirm the presence of considerable artisan skills as late as the sixteenth century [125] Knox says that, in second half of the seventeenth century, the country's manufactures were few: some calicoes, not so fine as good strong cloth for their own use [126] Regarding cotton he says '...Cotton of which there is good plenty,

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[120] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 337-338, makes reference to A K Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art,* Kelmscott, Essex House Press, 1908

[121] ibid , pp 337-338, makes reference to A K Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art,* Kelmscott, Essex House Press, 1908

[122] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon IV- The Exports and Imports of Ancient Ceylon', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol 1, no 4, April, 1954, p 20, makes reference to *Culavamsa*

[123] ibid , p 20

[124] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon II', p 202

[125] Wriggings, W Howard *Ceylon Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1960, p 62

[126] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1981, pp 253-254.

growing in the own Grounds sufficient make them good and strong cloth for their own use, and also to sell to the People of the Uplands, where cotton is not plenty.'[127] Cloth was received from Portuguese territories and it was also one of the articles that the Kandyans exchanged for their areca nut, cinnamon and elephants from south India at Chilaw, when the Portuguese controlled most the of maritime regions of Ceylon [128] The attitude of the Dutch East India Company towards the textiles of the country was no different from its profit-maximizing policy in other branches of trade and production. It formed part of the company's world production and distribution chain.

> The Dutch in Ceylon pursued, for a long time, in the importation and the sale of cloth, the same system which they had established in every other branch of trade, that had any prospect of large profits, namely a monopoly In the latter part of their government, however, as they began to be guided by more liberal and extended views of the real prosperity of their Eastern establishments, they opened this trade to the enterprise and speculation of merchants, continuing only to make up at Colombo their investments of cloth manufactured near Totecoreen and Palamcotta, which, were exported to Holland, there printed, and afterwards taken to Spain, for the South American markets The Dutch Company's Government sold only in the Island some cloth that was found damaged, or, for some other reason, was not approved of for their home investments '[129]

They imposed a high rate of duty of 25% on cloth imported by private traders and imposed taxes on all the cloths produced in their territories in the island. During the years 1800-1801 it was 5% in Manar and Jaffnapatam [130]

> 'Another aspect of its [Colombo] foreign trade was with Madura and Corommandel coast (South-India) Colombo shared well in this trade, as it needed food supply and clothing [Cachoi, a kind of coarse cloth used by the villagers and could be sold in large quantities], owing to the poor development these resources in the hinter land The Dutch imported a large quantities of rice and 'cachoi' to be sold in Colombo Here the people met to barter their areca nuts for rice and clothing '[131]

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127 ibid , pp 147-148

128 de Silva, Chandra Richard *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, pp 86, 135

129 Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 133

130 ibid , p 133

131 Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 63

4.2.2 Attire and Ornament

The attire of ancient Ceylon was in harmony with the prevalent social order as well as with the climate of the country. Individuals could be clearly distinguished from one another according to age, gender, and social status from their outer garments. There was also sharp difference between what one wore at home and when going out, and the latter again changed according to the function to be attended.

Ariyapala says that in ancient Ceylon people did not cover the upper part of their bodies, but lower garment was worn by both sexes. Even high class ladies did not cover the upper parts of their bodies before the custom of covering the upper part came into fashion. The ladies in ancient Ceylon wore an upper robe to cover their upper bodies when leaving their homes. However, they did not cover their breasts, the upper robe was just draped across their shoulders and the lower robe was worn much below the navel. Clothes which were much cut and sewn were not much used by the ancients.[132] W. A. De Silva also holds a similar opinion, saying that women usually wore clothes draped, covering their bodies, and men are mentioned as using clothes and shawls.[133] Some wore two lower garments, but others only one. The former is still [1956] followed in villages. Where some persons wore a highly valued robe, a separate robe was used for the upper part.[134]

From following account by Knox it is not difficult to discern the image of a nobleman in full traditional attire.

> The Habit of men when they appear abroad is after this sort. The Nobles wear Doublets of white or blew Calico, and about their middle a cloth, a white one next their skin, and a blew one or of some other colour or painted, over the white: a blew or red shash girt about their loyns, and a Knife with a carved handle wrought or inlaid with Silver sticking in their bosom; and a complete sort Hanger carved and inlaid with Brass and Silver by their sides. The Scabbard most part covered with Silver, bravely ingraven; a painted cane and sometimes a Tuck in it their hands, and a boys always bare-headed with long hair hanging down his back waiting upon him, ever holding a small bag in his hand, which is instead of a Pocket, wherein is Betel-leaves and nuts. Which they constantly keep chewing in their mouths, with Lime kept in a Silver Box

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132 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon,* pp. 320-322, 324; the author depends heavily on Martin Wickramasinghe's *Dress and Ornament in Ancient Ceylon or Purana-sinhala-strīgé āñduma* in reaching this conclusion.

133 de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 73.

134 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp. 322-323.

rarely engraven, which commonly they hold in their hands, in shape like a Silver Watch The men for ornament do wear Brass, Copper, Silver Rings on their Fingers, and some of the greatest Gold But non may wear any Silk '[135]

A similar description is given by Marshall regarding of the chieftains' attire in ancient Ceylon, although he wrote much later than Knox.

'The dress of chieftains, which seems not to have been changed for many centuries, is picturesque They wear a white cap, resembling a turban; their beards full and bushy, their hair long, and tied up in a round ball, (conde), a muslin or embroidered silk jacket, open in front, the sleeves fastened at the wrists with small gold buttons, tight to above the elbows, but puffed out to a great size at the shoulders, a printed calico or muslin cloth round the loins, falling below the knees, like very wide trousers In person of high rank, this part of the dress is very profuse, giving the nobility a pot-bellied appearance. In the folds of this cloth they usually carry a large knife or dagger, a betelbox and a writing stylus When walking, an attendant holds an ornamented talipot over them which serves as a parasol or umbrella Two or three men sometimes march in front, carrying large sticks, and a boy commonly follows, bearing a sword Men of distinction usually carry a long painted walking-cane In the house, the dress commonly worn is very simple, being merely a single cloth wrapped round the loins, the upper part of the body being quite naked The writer, when he used to call upon Eheylapola, the great chieftain in the country, at his residence, found him in this guise '[136]

Noblewomen were also distinguishable from their attire in traditional Ceylon. The following account is from Knox.

'In their houses the women regard not much what dress they go in But so put on their cloths as is most convenient for them to do their work But when they go abroad, and make themselves fine, they wear a short Frock, with sleeves to cover their bodies of fine white Callico wrought with blew and red Thread in flowers and branches on their Arms Silver Bracelets, and their fingers and toes full of Silver Rings about their necks, Necklaces of Silver, curiously wrought and engraven, guilded with Gold, hanging down so low as their breast In their ears hang ornaments made of Silver set with Stones, neatly engraven and guilded Their Hair they oyl, with Coker-oyl, to make it smooth, and comb it all behind Their hair grows not longer than their waists, they have lock of other hair fastened in a Plate of engraved Silver and guilded, to tie up with their won, in knot hanging down half their Backs Their hands are bare, but they carry a scarf of stripped or branched Silk or such as they can get, casting it carelessly on their head and shoulders About their Waists they have one or two Silver girdles made with Wire and Silver Plate handsomely engraven,

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[135] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 241

[136] Marshall, Henry, M D *'Ceylon'*, p 17

> hanging down on each side, one crossing the other behind And as they walk they chew Betel But notwithstanding all their bravery neither man nor woman wears shoes or stockings, that being a Royal dress, and only for the King himself '[137]

Again, Marshall gives a similar description of high ranking women's attire.

> 'Females of high ranks have similar lofty bearing, and dignity of manners, with the nobility of chieftains The dress of the women of distinction is of fine cloth, with plain or coloured edges, it fits close to their bodies, and descends to their toes, with folds round their waist, they wear no veils or covering on their heads, a handkerchief is thrown loosely over the left shoulder, their hair is long, and divided in the middle of the forehead, and tied up behind in a knot or konde When abroad, they wear ear-rings, chains, and bracelets, generally of silver but ladies of the high ranks wear gold ornaments They are cleanly in their habits, and careful of their persons, and keep their hair well oiled '[138]

The people of low caste were not permitted to wear upper garments until very recently.[139] To some extent the caste system influenced the dress of the people superficially, except for the distinctive dress of the native headmen. The traditional low caste women in the Kandyan districts did not cover the upper portions of their body. They had to conform to the dress code of their caste and this survived until into the nineteenth century [140]

The legs and feet of both men and women are bare; children of both sexes go without any clothing till they are five or six years of age.[141] For Knox '... going barefoot according to the custom of that land,...'.[142] Ludovici Varthema says '...they [Ceylonese] wear certain stuff of cotton or silk and go bare-footed.'[143]

> ' their dress has been evolving in harmony with the social organization, the normal dress is simple, in expensive and inartistic The economy of clothing is conditioned entirely by the natural environment, children up to about the age of seven years wear practically nothing when at home but put own light gown on occasions '[144]

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[137] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1981, p. 242

[138] Marshall, Henry, M D 'Ceylon', pp 17-18

[139] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 323

[140] Wickremeratne, L A 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c 1900', pp 170-171

[141] Marshall, Henry, M D Ceylon', p 18

[142] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 134

[143] Hulugalle,H A J *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p 68,Ludovici Varthema, an Italian from Bologna,came with the Portuguese when they first appeared in Ceylon in 1505

[144] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon*, p 116

In the ancient periods various ornaments and jewelry are mentioned: *kundalábarana* or ear ornaments were worn, both by men and women, hair was dressed in various ways, men wore their hair cropped behind, women wore their hair knotted behind, sometimes plaited and both men and women wore flowers on festive days.[145] Dyeing of gray hair and the use of combs and scent seem to have been fashionable then as in modern times.[146] Ibn Batuta's travel records reveal that all the women in the island of Ceylon possessed necklaces of precious stones of diverse colors; they wore them, also at their hands and feet, in the form of bracelets and anklets.[147] Knox gives an excellent account of the ways in which the people wore ornaments.

> 'It was in general a common custom with all sorts of People, to borrow Apparel or Jewels to wear when they go abroad, which being so customary is no shame nor disgrace to them, neither do they go about to conceal it. For among their friends or strangers where they go, they will be talking saying , This I borrowed of such an one, and this of another body Their Poverty is so great, that their ability will not reach to buy such Apparel as they do desire to wear; which nevertheless is but very mean and ordinary at the best.'[148]

In early times cinnamon also appears to have been used as a cosmetic.[149] The *Kekuna* and several other trees produce seeds from which the people expressed oil for anointing their bodies.[150] Many kinds of ornaments, such as jewelry, were worn by both males and females, and there are also references to the distinction between female and male jewelry.[151]

In the early days, umbrellas and walking sticks are mentioned as personal equipment.[152] Palm-leaves seems to have been umbrellas for ordinary people. '...when a lady has been chosen as a bride...and those of humble classes will carry either an umbrella or a palm-leaf over their heads.'[153]

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[145] de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 73.

[146] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 325.

[147] Hulugalle, H. A. J. *Ceylon of the Early Travelers*, p. 50.

[148] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp. 242-244.

[149] Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: IV', p. 17; makes reference to the *Sikhavalanda Ha Sikhavalanda Vinisa*, ed. by D. B. Jayatilaka.

[150] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese, (More Particularly with Reference to the District of Sabaragamuwa)', Read 4th November, 1848, *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, Vol. II-Part I, No 4, 1848, p. 49.

[151] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp. 326-328, 337.

[152] ibid., p. 314.

[153] ibid., p. 321.

Talipot leaves were often used as umbrellas. People of the privileged classes used decorated talipot leaves, while those of ordinary people were rough in nature.

> 'A leaf of the talipot tree serves to protect a Kandyan from the heat of the sun during the day; and two men by placing the broad end of their leaves together, with the aid of a few sticks, can form a tent that will completely defend them against rain, and shelter them during the night.'[154]

Referring to the leaves of tallipot trees and its uses to the people, Knox makes the following comment:

> '...one single Leaf being so broad and large, that it will cover some fifteen or twenty men, and keep them dry when it rains. The leaf being dryed is very strong, and limber and most wonderfully made for mens Convenience to carry along with them; for tho this leaf thus broad when it is open, yet it will fold close like a Ladies Fan, and then it is no bigger than a mans arm. It is wonderful light, they cut them into pieces for use are near like unto a Triangle. They lay them upon their heads as they travel with the peaked end foremost, which is convenient to make their way thro the Boughs and Thickets. When the Sun is vehement hot they use them to shade themselves from the heat. Souldiers all carry them; for besides the benefit of keeping them dry in case it rain upon the march, these leaves makes their Tents to ly under in the Night.' [155]

European Impact: '...Portuguese customs and manners and even dress became fashionable. The baila which is also popular in Ceylon is Portuguese in origin.'[156]

> 'In the maritime districts in general however, two parallel tendencies had long been at work. To some extent the existence of hierarchy of native officials jealous of their rights and sensitive to the symbols which emphasised their social preeminence, was the basis for a similar correlation between dress and caste. On the other hand the leveling tendencies of European rule and the nature of the European dress as a means of emphasising social distinction. For this reason the upper castes took umbrage at the prediction of the lower orders for European shoes and stockings as well as the proneness of low caste men to wear the traditional comb in their hair. The latter was almost a distinctive mark in the attire of the low country male and emphasised that the wearer counted for something caste-wise, an idea which accounted for its universal popularity. Resentment was also directed towards low caste men who began to wear the

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[154] Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p. 24.

[155] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp. 117-118.

[156] Perera, Father S. G. *A History of Ceylon I: The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p. 126.

> jacket or cloth coat which together with the *cambaya,* worn well below the knee, comprised the attire of a man of substance in the maritime districts '[157]

4.2.3 Household Utensils

Many kinds of tools had been used in ancient Ceylon, varying from simple household tools to implements used for different kinds of trade, such as agricultural, carpentry, smithery etc [158] The following account seems to represent the household utensils of the privileged classes of society.

> 'In houses considered of *asana,* seats which may be raised and covered with carpets and cloth, *yahana,* beds, *kuruyahana,* low beds, and covering for beds, chairs and seats consisting of *telisam,* smooth soft leather, *pidagam,* cushions and *etirili,* spreads of various kinds There were many forms of lamps and lights and *yantrapahan* (lamp clusters perhaps with revolving arrangements) House utensils consists of cooking pots, small vessels, large vessels, drinking vessels and plates These were made in earthenware or metal including gold '[159]

Among the household utensils mentioned by Ariyapala for the mediaeval period are beds, pillows, almirahs, chests, lamps, blankets, spreads, carpets, door-rugs, dishes, pitchers, cans, cases, mirrors, spoons, ladles, mats, goats' hair rugs, curtain, chairs, mattresses, water filters, jugs, kettles, keys, purse, ekel-broom, leaf-broom, axe, large knives with long handles, adze, ladder, winnowing-fans, pots, mortars, pestles, grinding-stones, chatties [160] The inhabitants used a stone hand mill, which is the exactly the same size and form as the quern formerly used in Scotland [161]

In many instances, the ordinary people of Ceylonese society had very limited basic domestic utensils for every day use. The following comments made by Knox are of interest in showing what they had in the pre-modern Ceylon. This did not change until quite recently in the ordinary homes of village people.

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[157] Wickremeratne, L A 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c 1900', *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon,* p 171, makes reference to Sitt, H C *Ceylon and Cingalese,* London, 1845, II, p 156ff

[158] Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon,* pp 551-561

[159] de Silva, W A 'A Contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 72

[160] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon* , pp 313-314

[161] Marshall, Henry, M D *'Ceylon'*, p 5

> Their Furniture is but small A few earthen pots which hang up in slings made of Canes in the middle of their houses, having no shelves, one or two brass Basons to eat in, a stool or two without backs For none but the king may sit upon a stool with a back There are also some baskets to put corn in, some mats to spread upon the ground to sleep on which is the bedding both for themselves and friends when they come to their houses. Also some Ebeny pestles about four foot long to beat rice out of the husk, and a wooden Morter to beat it in afterwards to make it white, a Hirimony or a Grater to grate their Coker-nuts with, a flat stone upon which they grind their Pepper and Turmeric, &c With another stone which they hold in their hands at the same time, they have also in their houses Axes, Bills, Houghs, Atches, Chissels, and other Tools for their use Tables they have none but sit and eat on the ground They eat their Rice out of China dishes, or Brass Basons, and they that have not them, on leaves The Carrees, or other sorts of Foods which they eat with their Rice, is kept in the Pans it is dressed in, '[162]

Household utensils of a chief consisted of but very few items. They were limited to the very essentials to keep ordinary life going.

> The houses generally contain nothing but rattan couches for sitting upon, together with a few chests for holding their dress and ornaments, the apartment a chief occupies it generally hung round with white cotton cloth Except the chiefs, both men and women sleep on mats on the floor '[163]

References are also made to drinking cups made of ivory in the Kandyan kingdom; these might have been used by chiefs rather than ordinary people. 'The Kandyans formerly used drinking-cups of ivory, which were so extremely thin, as to be rendered perfectly transparent and pliable; a friend having one of these remarkable vessels in his possession'[164] Pottery has been the most important and commonly used household utensil in the country. Many kinds and shape of pottery were used for different purposes. Red colored earthenware, called chatties, of a globular form, with a narrow neck and round lip, were universally used for carrying and holding water, and basin-shaped vessels for cooking, which stand the fire admirably [165]

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[162] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp 235-237

[163] Marshall, Henry, M D *'Ceylon'*, p 19

[164] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese, Their History, Government and Religion, the Antiquities, Institutions, Produce, Revenue, and Capabilities of the Island with Anecdotes Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People*, Vol II, Gregg International Publishers Limited, Hants, England, 1972, p 265

[165] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, p 41

4.2.4 Lighting and detergents

Oil lamps seem to have been used for the lighting of houses since early times. References are made to different kinds of trees used for extracting the oil for this purpose. Knox makes the following remarks about non-edible oil used in lamps.

> '... [cinnamon oil] burn in Lamps to give light in their houses but they make no Candles of it, neither are any Candles used by any but the king. Here are many sorts of Trees that bear Berries to make Oyl of, both in the Woods and gardens, but no eatable, but used only for their Lamps.'[166]

Henry Marshall gives a similar description of the uses of cinnamon oil for different purposes in the life of traditional Ceylonese.

> The cinnamon tree produces a species of fruits resembling an acorn, but not so large, which gets ripe about the later end of autumn, and is gathered by the natives for the purpose of extracting oil from it... this they use their hair and body on great occasions, and also for burning in their lamps. When mixed with coconut oil it gives extremely good light. The kings of candy use it for this purpose,...'[167]

Lewis makes reference to oil expressed from the seeds of *Kekuna* and other trees for the purpose of domestic lighting.[168] Kekuna or *Aleurite moluccana wild* is also known as the Candlenut tree.[169] Another important tree for oil seeds for this purpose was *mee (Bassia longifolia).* It grows to an enormous size, the fruit produces a pungent oil, which people use for many purposes.[170] Brodie mentions an important fine grain which people grew for oil. 'One of the most useful of these, so called fine grains, is the *tala* of the Sinhalese (*Sesame, Seasamum Orientale)* which yields an oil use for lamps and in medicines.'[171] Coconut oil was an important consumer

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166 Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp. 120-121. The *Sikhavalanda* of the 10th century contains the first reference to cinnamon in the local literature. See: Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: IV', p. 17; makes reference to the *Sikhavalanda Ha Sikhavalanda Vinisa*, ed. by D. B. Jayatilaka.

167 Percival, Robert. *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p. 339.

168 Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 49.

169 Child, Reginald. 'Report on the Soap Industry in Ceylon', *The Coconut Research Scheme(Ceylon)*, Bulletin No.1, Nov. 1934, p. 12.

170 Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol. I, p. 168.

171 Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalâwiya', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. III,

article not only in Ceylon society, but also in Europe. '... oil expressed from the kernel of the [coco] nut, used in Europe as a lubricator, for soap-making, and dressing cloths, and (partially) for candle-making, and lighting purposes: African palm oil and petroleum are its great rivals.'[172]

E. B. Denham, Director of Education, in his annual report for the year 1918, provides a list of fruits, leaves and roots used in olden days for toilet and cleaning purposes; some of them were being used in the interior of the country when the report was written.

> 'I give below a list of them, to which teachers should be able to add. They would do well to collect and keep them at school ready for use:- For cleaning the had: Fruits-lime, godapora (ගොඩපොර), Penela (පෙනෙල). Leaves- Kumbuk (කුඹුක්), imbul (ඉඹුල්), Roots- napiritta (නාපිරිත්ත මුල්), an excellent vermicide, and vinegar and water. Skin: Bark of the kokun (කොකුන්), effective remover of the dirt, soothing and odorous, penela fruits (පෙනෙල ගෙඩි). lime stones Teeth: Charcoal, roasted arecanut powders, coconut stalk (පොල්කැටි), roots or stems of karanda (කරඳ), pila (පිළ), bombu (බොම්බු), erandu (එරඳු), pinna (පින්න). The stems and roots of these fibrous plants can take a place of a tooth brush. Cloths: Ashes of coconut husks and branches (burnt). Smashed penela fruits (පෙනෙල ගෙඩි)to be soaked in water for a short time before washing.'[173]

There were a number of detergents in use in the old Ceylonese society. The following two, as highlighted by Perera, are sometimes used in the countryside even in modern times. 'Patients suffering from small pox or a kindered diseases are kept in a separate hut, cloth dyed in turmeric and margosa leaves are used in the room; and after recovery and infusion of margosa leaves is rubbed on their heads before they are bathed.'[174]

4.2.5 Health and Hygiene

Health: Medical care is widely considered as a part of consumption, although it has the characteristics of investment. The cost of providing

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No. 9, 1856. p. 145.

[172] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903: Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803, its Present Agricultural and Commercial Enterprises, and its Unequalled Attraction to Visitors.* A. M. & J. Ferguson, Colombo, 1903, p. 52.

173 Report of the Director of Education for 1918, CO: 57/199/1918.

[174] Perera, Arthur A. *Sinhalese Folklore: Ceylon,* The British India Press, Mazgaon, Bombay, 1917, p.25.

medical care is borne either individually, collectively, or both. The benefits derived are not necessarily confined to the individual receiving the facility. Any society, at any point of its social progress, has a certain kind of medical care system and it is an integral part of the social institutions.

> 'In all human groups, no matter how small or technologically primitive, there exists a body of belief about the nature of disease, its causation and cure, and its relation to other aspects of group life Religion, medicine and, morality are frequently found together in the behavioural act or event '[175]

The people who lived on the island before Vijaya had their own systems of medicine and some are still practiced in the countryside, known as *wattoruwa vedakama*.[176] It is reasonable to assume that the people of ancient Ceylon, who had reached a relatively high level of civilization, had a system of medicine and hygiene and this assumption is confirmed by the numerous references in the ancient chronicles, literature and inscriptions, as well as from archaeological remains[177] Sinhalese or *Ayurvedic* medicine is derived from the Hindus, which Dr. Royle says is more ancient than the Greek[178] However, the natives would have undoubtedly added new treatments to what they received from India through trial and error over the centuries.

> The system of medicine practiced by the Ayurvedic physicians of Sri Lanka is almost identical with that of India Its history dates back to many thousands of years, and the books said to have been compiled by Rishis. These Ayurveda books are complete works of science including even the teaching of surgery and anatomy and they contain descriptions of surgical instruments used at that time '[179]

Ayurveda was practiced over the last three or four thousand years, while

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[175]Hughes,Charles C 'Ethnomedicine', *International Encyclopaedia of Social Science*, p 88

[176]Wikramanayake, T W *Food and Nutrition*, p 3, makes reference to Wijerama, E M 'Historical Background of Medicine in Ceylon', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the British Medical Association*, 43, 1947 1-16 and Wijerama, E M 'Systems of Medicine in Ceylon', *Ceylon Medical Students' Magazine*, 3 (1), 1952 46-49

[177]Paranavitana, S 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol III, no 2, October, 1953, p 123

[178] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, vol II, pp 45-46

[179]Fernando, Seela *Traditional Herbal Food and Medicine in Sri Lanka*, A study Conducted for the National NGO Council of Sri Lanka with Support from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Colombo, Sri Lanka,1982, p 9

the western system has a history of only three or four centuries.[180] The Homeopathic system of medicine, a supposed modern invention of Germans, has been known and acted upon from the earliest period both in India and Ceylon.[181] Numerous references have been made to medical practices in the country since the very early days of the Aryan civilization. W. A. de Silva makes the following remarks about the indigenous medicine in ancient Ceylon.

> 'Mention is made of medicines and medicated gruels, of physicians and hospitals for the sick and convalescent homes for those recovering from illness and *kumbalgeya* or maternity wards in villages and towns.'[182]

The *Mahavamsa* contains a number of references to the founding of hospitals and dispensaries by the kings of ancient Ceylon. Of these, the earliest is in the reign of Pandukabhaya in the 4th century BC.[183] The available information about ancient hospitals is not sufficient to draw a complete picture of how they functioned.

> 'We have no detailed information as to the methods adopted in the treatment of patients in the old hospitals in Ceylon. But we may reasonably assume that they confirmed in general to the principles of the Ayurvedic system. Both male and female attendants seem to have been granted lands to be held on the condition of attending to the patients undergoing treatments at these hospitals.'[184]

During the ancient period, every Sinhalese of noble birth was expected to know Ayurveda. Besides royalty, the nobles included Buddhist monks and poets.[185] Public health was given due priority and medicine was an important part of the ancient education. Medicine and surgery seem to have been rather widely studied, and the *áyurvedic* system of medicine as it is known today seems to have been in quite an advanced state.[186] It is said that some branches of medicine had not been developed in parallel with the others.

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180 ibid., 1982, p 10.

181 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon*, vol. II, p. 46.

182 De Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 73.

183 Paranavitana, S. 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', p. 124.

184 ibid., p. 130.

185 Fernando, Seela. *Traditional Herbal Food and Medicine in Sri Lanka*, p. 9.

186 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 281.

> 'Dr Day says, as they have a horror of dead bodies, and object of desections, they know nothing of anatomy, but practice cupping and bleeding, and amputate with a knife heated to a dull red - a method formerly practiced in Europe '[187]

Medicine administered under the native practice took several forms, even today these are common in the country. Wijesekere's following explanation seems to cover most parts of the medicine applied in the country.

> 'Sinhalese medicine consists chiefly of oil and decoctions, pills and gruels internally taken, poultices and pastes externally applied Plants, roots, nuts and tubers are used in their manufacture which is carried out in accordance with a system of mnemonic formulas serving as prescriptions '[188]

The ingredients for making medicines were collected from the surroundings where people lived and every person had a general knowledge of medicinal plants. It seems that, in many instances, people received remarkable cures from indigenous treatments. Their medicinal preparations were chiefly compounds of herbs, of which an immense number were employed [189]

Knox makes the following comment on the herbal medicine from his personal experience.

> 'Nor are they worse supplyed with Medicinal Herbs, The Woods are their Apothecaries Shops, where with Herbs, Leaves, and the Rinds of Trees they make all their Physic and Plasters, with which sometimes they will do notable Cures A neighbour or mine a Chingulay, would undertake to cure a broken Leg or Arm by application of some Herbs that grow in the Woods, and that with that speed, that the broken Bone after it was set should knit by the time one might boyl a pot of Rice and three carrees, that is about an hour and an half or two hours, and I knew a man who told me he was thus cured They will cure an Imposthume in the Throat with the Rind of a Tree called Amaranga (whereof I myself had the experience;) by chewing it for a day or two after it is prepared, and the swallowing the spittle I was well in a day and a Night tho before I was exceedingly ill, and could not swallow my Victuals.'[190]

Plants were not the only ingredients applied to make native medicine. In some instances minerals were in use. Strong minerals seem to have been used for exceptional cases by well experienced physicians.

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[187] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, p 46
[188] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon*, p 116
[189] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, pp 45-46
[190] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 125

> ' they are not unquestioned with the use of minerals, particularly mercury, and boast of being able to prepare it better than Europeans, having a secret which renders it less injurious, but they often only mix it with fat Marco Polo mentions that the Brahmins in his time had some secret way of preparing it, and the profess that when taken in small dose monthly along with sulphur it renews youth '[191]

In addition, bezoar stones, a smooth, glossy, dark-green concretion, found in the stomachs and gall-bladders of animals, commonly in monkeys, are in great repute all over India and Ceylon as an antidote to poison [192]

In ancient Ceylon physicians were respected members of society and received royal patronage; the royal physician was attached to the court.[193] The physicians did not work for pecuniary gains and even the Sinhalese kings, among whom were famous surgeons and physicians, practiced medicine as an act of service to gain merit [194]

> '[King]Dutthagámini (101-77 BC) on his death-bed recounted his meritorious deeds, and in the course of this he says "Constantly in eighteen places have I bestowed on the sick foods for the sick and remedies, as ordered by physicians " These physicians are said to have been paid from the royal treasury The king of Ceylon who is best known for the founding of hospitals is Buddhadása (398-426 AD) who was himself a physician '[195]

In addition to the *Ayurvedic* medicine and *wattoruwa wedakam*, there are the *Natu Maranthu* or *Siddha* system and the *Greco-Arab* or the *Unani* system. The former was brought to the island by the south Indian Dravidians and the latter by Moorish settlers.[196] 'Along with these different allopathic systems of medicine... there exists the homeopathic system...'[197]

The ordinary people, throughout history, had a knowledge of preparing simple medicine using medicinal plants found in their gardens or nearby woods and they consulted the village physician when they failed to arrest the situation. Most of the time they had simple medicine prepared in advance in their houses to treat simple ailments. One of them was

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191 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol. II, 1876, pp 45-46

192 Ibid , p 46

193 Paranavitana, S 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', p 123

194 Fernando, Seela *Traditional Herbal Food and Medicine in Sri Lanka*, p 9

195 Paranavitana, S 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', p 124 ,makes reference to Mahavamsa, Chap 10 & 32, see also Knighton, William *The History of Ceylon*, Studies on Sri Lanka Series No 16, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, India, 1993, pp 16-17

196 Wikramanayake, T W *Food and Nutrition*, p 3

197 Ibid , p 3

cinnamon oil, which was used for aches and pains [198] The oil extracted from the seeds of *kekuna,* and *mee* were also used for this purpose, as well as being burned in lamps.

Hygiene: Care was also taken by ancient Sinhalese to have a supply of good drinking water and numerous old wells have been found at the ruined cities of Ceylon.[199] The Assistant Government Agent for the District of Nuwarakalawiya, which is considered to be the cradle of ancient civilization, makes the following comment on the health of ancient Ceylon in his annual report for the year 1870.

> 'I cannot help thinking that in ancient times, when it was densely populated and highly cultivated, it must have been a very healthy place indeed '[200]

Knox had much intimacy with and an impartial impression of the natives' mode of life than any other European during his twenty years of living with the ordinary people in the island. He held the following opinions about the hygiene of ordinary man.

> 'In dressing of their victuals they are not to be discomended: for generally they are cleanly and very handy about the same. And after one is used to that kind of fare, as dress it, it is very savoury and good They sit upon a mat on the ground, and eat But he, whom they do honour and respect, sits on a stool and his victuals on another before him. ...They always wash their hands and mouths both before and after they have eaten; .. They are very cleanly both in their bodies and heads, which they very often wash, and also when they have been at stool they make use of water.'[201]

This was same at the beginning of the British period. 'Both sexes are remarkably clean and neat both in their persons and houses.'[202] 'Cinglese women are much more pleasant in their manners...more elegant in their persons than those of the other Indian nations. Their extreme cleanliness is a trait which renders them particularly agreeable to an Englishman, though he finds it something difficult to reconcile himself to the strong exhalations of the cocoa-nut oil.'[203] People of the country seem to have been in good health and to have taken care of hygiene even in the second half of the

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[198] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon,* p. 120.

[199] Paranavitana, S. 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', pp. 132-133

[200] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarkalawiya CO: 57/51/1870.

[201] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon,* pp. 236-237.

[202] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon,* p. 170

[203] ibid , p 182

seventeenth century. In addition to other contributory factors such as good food, clean water and clean air, the life expectancy of a person is a good indication of the nature of health and hygiene. The following comment made by Knox provides an insight into the situation in the country.

> 'They live to a great Age very often to fourscore, and hale at that age, the King's Sister was near an hundred They are healthy and of a sound constitution The Diseases this Land is most subject to, are Agues and Fevours, and sometimes to Bloody-fluxes The small-Pox also sometimes They are also subject to Aches and Pains in their bodies For the Remedy whereof they have excellent oynments and oyls, which they make and keep to have ready when they have occasion Here are no professed Physicians nor Chyrurgeons, but all in general have some skill that way '[204]

Knox made the above comment on the Kandyan kingdom and it was the period when the native civilization of the country had degenerated to a great extent. In this period state expenditure on social welfare was at minimal; health and education had no support from the center, no provision was made for the care of infants and old people and there were no hospitals, and the services rendered by medical practitioners were paid for by the patient, often in kind [205]

4.2.6 Education

In the past of Sri Lanka, the country developed educational institutions and sophisticated cultural and technological arrangements to meet some of the basic needs of an agrarian economy and a strongly religious feudal social order.[206]

The education of boys was carried on by Buddhists priests at the village *pansala* (temple), the home of the incumbent of the nearest *vihára,* just as the village priest taught at the church door in mediaeval England.[207] Besides the village temple, there were educational institutions called *pirivena* based in monasteries. These were especially meant for religious

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[204] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 281

[205] Pieris, Ralph 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p 68

[206] Jayaweera, Swarna. 'Education', in Tissa Fernando and Robert N Kearney (eds) *Modern Sri Lanka A Society in Transition*, Foreign and Comparative studies: South Asian Series, No 4, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracause University, New York, 1979, p 131

[207] Coomaraswamy, A K *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, p 49, quoted in Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 371-372

studies, but some secular subjects which were supposed to be harmonious with religion were also taught.

> 'Subjects like Sinhala, Sanskrit, prosody, rhetoric, history, logic, medicine, seem to have been taught [in *pirivena*]. It is doubtful whether the other subjects were taught in the *pirivena*; but most of them ... astronomy, science of magic signs, magic, and painting seem to have been studied by the people, perhaps on their own initiative. The knowledge of subjects like magic and astronomy must have been handed down from father to son.'[208]

The Sinhalese have many books both in verse and prose on moral subjects, grammar, medicine, astronomy, and various branches of literature common to other Eastern nations, including a very complete history of the kings of Ceylon.[209] Since ancient times royal patronage had been sufficiently extended to education, but education had no support from the center in the Kandyan kingdom.[210] Literacy seems to have been limited to the upper class of society and a small proportion of the ordinary people.

> 'The upper ranks of the Kandyans can generally read and write their own language. They write on slips of the leaf of the palmyrah, and of the talipot tree, by means of iron stylus which they wear in their waist cloth. They write from left to right, and in a very expeditious or off-handed manner.' [211]

The Dutch established a widespread system of elementary education, which made a large section of the Sinhalese and the Tamils literate.[212] They had a network of schools in their territories.The spreading of Christianity was carried out through these schools, in addition to the teaching of arithmetic and reading and writing of Sinhalese and Tamil.[213] Their elementary education system was a very successful one. Even in England, in the eighteenth century, elementary education was not so widespread as in the Dutch territory in Ceylon.[214] The education of the indigenous people under the Dutch was undertaken only as a corollary to the process of Christianization, and the procedure of giving employment only to Protestants created a community of hypocrites.[215]

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[208] Ariyapala, M. B(1956). *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 279.
[209] Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p. 18.
[210] Pieris, Ralph. 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations ...', p. 68.
[211] Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p 18.
[212] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 4.
[213] Mendis,G. C. *Ceylon Today and Yesterday. Main Currents of Ceylon History*, p. 61.
[214] ibid., p. 63.
[215] Perera, A. B. 'Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon', pp. 47-48.

> 'If we examine Ceylon as it is today, we shall find that the most advanced parts are those that were ruled directly by the Dutch, and at least a part of the credit for this must go to the Dutch People in the Dutch territory became literate and got accustomed to the rule of law and the cultivation of commercial crops As a result they benefited more than the others by the developments that took place under British rule '[216]

The Dutch education system was primarily under the religious institutions. The discipline given was not sufficient to create a rational individual. It did not encourage the individual to pursue his trade on modern lines. This was similarly true of the traditional ancient education in the island. Nevertheless, the discipline given in a religious institution is not always wasted

> 'It must not be supposed that educational and religious institutions are ranked as wasteful or unproductive In so far as they tend to increase knowledge, instil virtue, and extirpate vice, they are in highest degree useful and profitable to the State, by promoting order, peace and morality '[217]

4.3 Auxiliary Services: *backing for consumption*

4.3.1 Housing

W. A. de Silva says that in ancient times the streets in big cities were full of two or three-storied houses, and even in small towns wealthy merchants occupied buildings of more than one storey. There were guest houses(*bojana sálá*) common assemblies (*ásana sálá*) furnished with seats, recreation halls (*veni sálá*) and pavilions (*mandapa*) [218]

In the heyday of the *Dry Zone civilization* there must have been well-planned and elegantly built residences at least for the clergy, royalty and upper class. Still visible ruins of ancient structures testify to the sheer diversity of the ancient constructions. Paranavitana's account in this regard is worth quoting.

> 'We also find remains of bath-rooms among the ruins at Anurádhapura and Polonnaruwa These were, in most cases, paved with stone slabs and in them

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[216] Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, pp 63-64

[217] Wall, George 'Introduction to A History of the Industries in Ceylon', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol X, No 37, 1888, p 332

[218] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 72

> we find well-carved basins of stone for washing purposes. ... Drainage has been carefully planned by the ancient Sinhalese builders...There were also underground drainage passages built of terra-cotta pipes fitted one to another. Remains of such a drain have been unearthed in the excavations near the royal palace at Anurádhapura...'[219]

Monasteries in the olden days seem to have been built in a grand manner. To construct these high buildings and maintain them as well as their inhabitants, the society must have produced a considerable surplus over the mere consumption needs of the tiller of the soil. The following account is of an ancient monastery.

> 'All that now remains of a building called the Brazen palace in the "Mahawanso", from its being covered with brass tiles, erected 161 BC, are 1600 stone pillars, about 12 feet high ... Priests' houses are originally, in compliance with the orders of Sakya, little more than sheds, made of cadjans or mud, but when they came to be patronised by kings, this stern simplicity was laid aside, and they were housed in buildings like Brazen monastery, containing 1000 rooms ... The Brazen monastery, or more popularly the "Lowa-Maha-Paya," was not the only monastery in the island, but all traces of the others have disappeared.'[220]

Fa-Hien reports that the merchants' dwellings in Anurádhapura were very grand and the side streets and main thoroughfares were level and well-kept.[221] As regards the construction of buildings, usually the first storey was of brick or stone, the upper storeys of wood.[222]

In villages, in addition to the dwelling houses, there were guest houses with seats and sometimes a meeting house as well.[223] Literary works and ancient ruins provide sufficient evidence of giant and elegant palaces, monasteries and monuments, but little information is given about the dwellings of the ordinary people in this early period. Brohier, after making a laborious search for the ruins of the ordinary people's homes, gives an excellent account.

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[219]Paranavitana,S. 'Medicine and Hygiene as Practiced in Ancient Ceylon', pp.132-133.

[220] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon,* vol. II, p. 51.

[221]Hulugalle, H. A. J. *Ceylon of the Early Travelers,* p.17; Fa- Hien, who spent two years in Ceylon, mostly at Anuradhapura, one of the earliest and most famous Buddhist pilgrims to come to Ceylon. He was in the island some time between 399- A.D. and 414 A.D. He traveled over Himalayas and trough India and came to Ceylon from Bengal. by a ship. He was a saintly man is referred to as *Sakyaputra* see: ibid., p. 12.

[222] Elliott, Charles Brooke. *The Real Ceylon,* p. 62.

[223] de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 72.

> '... the ancient industry of a simple unwarlike people with a highly developed rural and pastoral nature, and possessed of a surprisingly ingenious irrigation system which fostered it... while they raised those very irrigation marvels and the lavishly adorned palaces for the occupation of royalty, or the many monastic buildings and ornate temples replete with imagery and fresco, but were yet content to demonstrate their humility by sheltering themselves in houses built of impermanent material. The monsoon rains, and the white-ants must have razed these to the ground long ago.'[224]

Ariyapala makes the following comments on the rich people, with special reference to mediaeval Ceylon.

> '... the well-to-do had reasonably large houses with the necessary apartments and rooms, while the poor had to be contend with just a hut of one or two rooms wherein they had to manage all their business...The rich had their houses built of stone, mortar and lime, and had their roofs tiled. They were complete in all respects, with the necessary doors, windows... The doors and windows were supplied with keys, locks and hinges. ...The walls of houses were whitewashed. The houses also had compounds or courtyards. ...The larger houses had separate rooms for different purposes, the number of such depending on the social standing and the wealth of the person. Such separate rooms referred are : a room or separate building for pounding paddy; and sheds for keeping chariots.'[225]

The houses of the masses in the mediaeval period were similar to what Brohier inferred about the ancient period in the country.

> 'The houses of the poorer people were built of clay... The poor had no locks to their doors, which were either tied with a piece of string or a bar was kept against them to prevent their opening.'[226]

All the houses, however small, had their kitchens.[227] No reference is made to chimneys, either in the ancient or the mediaeval period. The tradition of including a chimney in the housing structure seems unfamiliar to the country.

Ariyapala admits that the art of the carpenters, builders, and smiths was developed to a very high degree around the thirteenth century and also

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[224] Brohier, R. L. *Discovering Ceylon*, p. 90.

[225] Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp. 312-313; makes reference to Ephigraphia Zeylanica 2.3.130.

[226] ibid., pp. 312-313.

[227] ibid., p. 313.

makes reference to master artisans and a guild of artisans in carpentry [228] This is contrary to what Knox says about theses trades in the country. References are also made to painters, stone-cutters, carpenters, lime and brick makers in the mediaeval period [229]

Some argue that the ancient buildings would have been great in size, but not in elegance. The following account is made with special reference to the Kandyan kingdom, when the civilization, not excepting the architecture, had reached its lowest ebb.

> 'An enormous quantity of architectural ruins are found in Ceylon As far as we can discern from the remains of these ancient buildings, they are more remarkable for size and extent than elegance of design, and the private dwellings of towns in the interior must have been wretched, if we are to judge from those of Kandy in 1815 The Maritime towns have all been erected by foreigners -Tamils, Moors, Portuguese, or Dutch '[230]

The description of Kandy, the capital of the last Sinhalese kingdom, which fell to the British in 1815, provides a rough idea of traditional Sinhalese urban life, although it, too, was part of a declining civilization.

> This town is very picturesquely situated on the margin of a small artificial lake, and surrounded on all sides by thickly wooded hills in the lake is miniature island, where the kings of Kandy formerly kept their wives. The English turned it into a powder magazine When the English arrived it [Kandy] was a miserable hole, fearfully dirty, and composed of mud cabins, as the kings reserved the luxuries of windows and tiles for themselves, their subjects being only allowed to live in huts The palace was a mean building, some parts of which still remain, and have been converted into a court-house '[231]

The description of the dwellings of ordinary people given by Knox in the second half of the seventeenth century gives a clear impression of what it would have been in the ancient periods. It is quite similar to Brohier's and Ariyapala's descriptions of the ordinary houses.

> Their Houses are small, low, thatched Cottages, built with sticks, daubed with clay, the walls made very smooth For they are not permitted to build their houses above one story high, neither may they cover with tiles, nor whiten their

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[228] ibid , p 340

[229] ibid , pp 337-338, makes reference to A K Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*

[230] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, p 47

[231] ibid , 1876, p 8

> walls with lime, but there is a Clay which is as white, and that they use sometimes They employ no Carpenters, or house builders, unless some few noble-men, but each one buildeth his own dwelling In building whereof there is not so much as a nail used, but instead of them every thing which might be nailed, is tyed with rattans and other strings, which grow in the woods in abundance, whence the builder hath his Timber for cutting The Country being warm, many of them will not take pains to clay their walls, but make them of boughs and leaves and Trees The poorest sort have not above one room in their houses, few above two, unless they be great men Neither doth the King allow them to build better They have no Chimneys in them, but make their fires in one corner, so that the roof is all blacked with the smoke '[232]

Similar evidence of the ordinary people's houses is given by Marshall.

> The huts or dwellings are commonly situated in rather sheltered situations They are usually constructed of mud, composed of a ferruginous earth, and in the maritime provinces, they are thatched with coconut leaves, in the Kandyan country with paddy straw They are surrounded by a clump of trees, most commonly the jak-tree, coconut tree, and the plantain tree The dwellings are build separate from one another each hut being, in a certain degree, independent '[233]

People belonging to the upper class of the society had good houses, both in the ancient and mediaeval periods The following account was given by Knox of the houses of the upper classes in Ceylonese society in the second half of the seventeenth century

> The great people have handsome and commodious houses They have commonly two buildings one opposite to the other, joined together on each side with a wall, which make a square Courtyard in the middle Round about against the walls of their houses are banks of clay to sit on, which they often daub over with soft Cow-dung, to keep them smooth and clean Their slaves and Servants dwell round about without in other houses with their wives and children '[234]

This is further confirmed by Marshall

> The houses of the chiefs are raised on a low terrace, built in the form of a hollow square, presenting externally a dead wall, and internally bordering the open area of veranda, which with the side rooms communicate by narrow doors The houses of the chiefs are tiled Most of the rooms in the houses of the

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232 Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 235

233 Marshall, Henry, M D *Ceylon*, p 19

234 Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 235

> chiefs are badly lighted, having small openings, or windows hardly large enough to admit the human head The floors are of clay, and are occasionally covered with a dilute mixture of fresh cow-dung with water, which serves the purpose of keeping off insects '[235]

During the Portuguese period the missionaries built their churches according to the classical Western styles and thus new horizons opened up before the eyes of Ceylonese architects[236] The Portuguese style of architecture influenced housing in the country. The broad window called the *janela* and the round tile which is still commonly used in the Island and sometimes furniture are used similar to those used by the Portuguese.[237] The Portuguese lifestyle seems to have influenced urban life considerably more than that in the countryside.

> The Catholic churches dominated the Colombo landscape projecting a new sky line There were many fine buildings, grand mansions, wide streets and walks and large houses, They were built spacious, airy and high with stone walls as if meant to stand for ever '[238]

The Dutch, while they were controlling the maritime provinces, improved the standard of building construction on the island.[239] Like the Portuguese, their influence seems to have affected urban life more than the rural. And it was much easier to put the towns on a European footing than the countryside The Government regulated the orderly development of the city of Colombo to ensure that the construction was in harmony with the community's interest[240]

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235 Marshall, Henry, M D 'Ceylon', p 19

236 Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 126

237 Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, p 52

238 Grataien, L J 'Colombo in the 17th Century', *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Registrar*, vol III, p 287 and also 'Journey and Voyages' *J R A S (C B)*, no 40 (1890), p 315, quoted in Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 60

239 Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, pp 58-59

240 Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 62 (footnote), makes reference to Resolution June 10, 1659, Dutch Records, no 9, Government Archives and Governors in Dutch Ceylon , Translated by R Raven Hart, Colombo, 1952, vol 1, p 78

> The Dutch residences were confined to the Castle These were bungalows with low verandas, wooden pillars, low railings, front and rear gardens, situated facing the roads They were suitable for tropical living as they were large and well ventilated Shade trees were planted in front of the bungalows In the surrounding villages were the native dwellings They were made out of clay beaten into walls and floor and had cadjan roofs The visible difference between the town and the village dwellings was sharp '[241]

4.3.2 Trade and Commerce

Since very early times the country has been involved in trading in one way or another This trade could be categorized under two headings: external trade and internal trade, the former could be broken down into entrepôt trade, export and import.

External Trade: The patterns of Ceylon's external trade were largely determined by the geographical and historical factors.[242] Being situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean and to the extreme south of the Indian Peninsula, Ceylon enjoyed a strategic position commanding the sea routes that linked one side of the ocean to the other [243] The Chinese first began to traverse the Indian Ocean in their own ships about the beginning of the Christian era and there was a brisk trade between China and Ceylon before the expansion of seafaring in the Indian Ocean [244] Ptolemy says that commercial relations had been established between Ceylon and the Babylonians, Persians and Egyptians, and the Sinhalese kings was represented by an embassy at the court of Rome [245]

Entrepôt Trade: From early times, Ceylon's favorable location in the Indian ocean made her an attractive entrepôt [246] The ancient literature

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241 ibid , pp 67-68

242 Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and Economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, Central Bank of Ceylon, 1965, p 1

243 Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon I The Ports of Ancient Ceylon', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol 1, no 2, October, 1951, p 109

244 Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon III', pp 306-307

245 Wijesinhe, J E 'Agriculture - Past & Present', p 39, The earliest map of Ceylon which we possess is that of Ptolemy of the first century after Christ, see H W Codrington, *A Short History of Ceylon*, pp 3-5

246 Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and Economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p 1

testifies that the port trade in Ceylon goes back to before the Aryan colonization of the island.[247] The first foreigners to use Ceylonese ports for trade seem to have been Indians. Barua says the trade connection between India and Ceylon goes back to a very early date. [248] *Mahatitta*, the first port to be mentioned in the *Mahavamsa*, can now be called a buried city and the remains of Roman pottery, coins and articles of foreign origin are found there. It was a great port in the early centuries of the Christian era [249] This port played an important role both in the foreign trade of the island and in the inter-oceanic commerce between the East and West [250] It was the principle seaport and had also developed into a relatively large *nagara* or city inhabited by mainly local and foreign merchants [251] Perera states that the Ceylonese entrepôt trade gained fresh momentum in the 5th century AD.

> 'There was a very important development in the history of commerce in the Indian Ocean during the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries The centre of the entrepôt trade which during the earlier centuries was confined to South Indian ports now shifted to Ceylon Ethopians and Persians used to buy in Ceylon the silk brought by the Indians from China ships from China, India, Ethopia and Persia brought their wares to Ceylon, from whence they were transhipped to other ports The Sinhalese themselves took an active part in this trade '[252]

Bertolacci makes the following inference about the brisk trade in and around this ancient sea port.

> 'I suppose that, in remote antiquity, the coasting trade, from one half of Asia to the other half, have passed through the Straits of Manar, and that, consequently, a great emporium was formed on the coast of Ceylon opposite to it Many merchants from Persia and Arabia, from Surat and Malabar coast, would prefer disposing of their goods in those places of depot, and returning home with their ships laden with the produce of Coromendel, and of the countries near or beyond the Ganges Hence, numberless establishments must necessarily have been formed at and near Manar, The productions of different climates, and the manufactures of distant regions, must have been brought to the great places of general resort, for the purpose of consumption and exchange '[253]

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247 Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon I', p 109

248 Barua, Beni Madhab *Ceylon Lectures Studies on Sri Lanka Series No 5*, p. 8

249 Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon I', 1951, p 111

250 ibid , p 109

251 Hettiaratchi, S B *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c , A D 300-1000)*, pp 416-417

252 Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon III', p 304

253 Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial*

The fleets of the Chinese carrying silks and ceramic wares to trading stations on the East African coast, and the Arabian vessels carrying spices of the East Indies to European markets touched Ceylonese ports, which lay conveniently half-way [254] With the rise and spread of Islam in the 6th and 7th centuries, the Arabs soon wrested the trade of the Indian Ocean from the Persians and they began to control the Indian Ocean, starting from about the 8th century until the advent of the Portuguese at the dawn of the 16th century.[255] The country was known as an entrepôt during the Dambadeniya period.[256] The emergence of a number of small ports rather than one or two major ports was important feature of this period, although it does not reflect small-scale trading and it is known that ships from Arabia, Gujarat and parts of south-east Asia, as well as those from India called at these ports [257] Until the early seventeenth century, Sri Lankan ports seem to have been important in international trade [258] However, it is maintained that, during the Portuguese and the Dutch periods (1505-1795 AD) Colombo continued to be one of the ports carrying entrepôt trade [259]

The shifting of civilization to the Wet Zone seem to have been adversely affected the entrepôt trade. Civil wars, foreign invasions, constant changing of the kingdoms, many rival kingdoms could certainly create anarchy at times. When the central authority of the country became weaker, it would certainly have affected the proper administration of trade and the maintenance of law and order, thereby threatening the free movement of commercial vessels. About the middle of the 14th century, Colombo appears to have been the center of considerable piracy and, as a result of this, foreign merchants wishing to trade with Ceylon were forced to avoid Colombo and buy their goods from South Indian ports to which Ceylon's foreign trade was diverted [260]

Interests of Ceylon, pp 10-11

[254] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon I', p 109

[255] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon III', p 305.

[256] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 90

[257] ibid , p 100

[258] ibid , p 53

[259] Panditaratna, B L The Port-capital City of Colombo A Geographical Interpretation, *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol xxii, nos 1&2, 1974, p 141.

[260] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon· I', p 117, Colombo was then known as 'kolontota' which means a ferry port or haven shallow bay as opposed to deep bay, see Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, 1960,p 52, Author makes reference to Sri Dharmarama Sidath Sagara, A Johnson, Royal Asiatic Society, No 1, p 537 and also G C Mendis, Early History of Ceylon, p 68

Exports and Imports

Exports: From the earliest times, Ceylon was famous throughout the then known world for its gems; these appear as an export, together with pearls, and were included among the presents sent to India during the reign of Vijaya and Devanampiyatissa.[261] Ceylon was exporting elephants to India as early as 3rd century BC.[262] Even in the pre-Christian periods, all the major exports of Ceylon were under royal monopoly.[263] It is customary to say that Ceylon exported grains to India and other countries in the ancient periods. This cherished belief is rejected by Perera (**see above *rice***).

> 'It is popularly believed that Ceylon exported rice to India in ancient times, and that Ceylon was the granary of the East. This certainly is a myth which has no historical foundation. We are aware of only one reference to Ceylon having exported any foodstuff to any country. In an ancient Tamil work it is stated that food stuffs from Ceylon were brought by ship to the port of Korkai. But the content in which the reference occurs suggests that this allusion was made, more to show the importance of this port, than to record historical fact.'[264]

The kings of mediaeval period obtained far less revenue than in the ancient periods and they began to develop and diversify their foreign trade, especially in cinnamon, areca nuts, coconuts, cardamoms, pepper and ivory, in addition to ancient gems, pearls and elephants.[265] The export articles also included monkeys and peacocks.[266] The nut of the areca palm (*areca catechu*), one of the most important export items, had been an article of commercial value long before the arrival of Portuguese in the east.[267] Ferguson says cinnamon export from the island became famous since the middle of the 14th century.

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261 Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: IV', p. 14.

262 ibid., p. 18; makes reference to J. W. McCrindle. *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrain,* London, 1877, pp. 173-175.

263 Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: I', p. 110.

264 Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: II', p. 200.

265 Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 4; Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p. 65; and de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History,* p. 101.

266 Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 1; makes reference to : Kandyan Peasantry commission Report, p. 65; Turner, Hand Book of Ceylon, 1922, p. 8; Mendis, Early history of Ceylon, pp. 67-70; Census of Ceylon, 1946, vol. I, p. 11.

267 de Silva, Chandra Richard. *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, p. 207; the author makes reference to S. Arasaratnam, 146.

> 'There can be no doubt that Ceylon *cinnamon* is the finest in the world, celebrated from the middle of the fourteenth century according to authentic records, and one of the few products of important indigenous to the island It was known through Arabs caravans to the Romans, who paid in Rome.. '[268]

The coconut palm was cultivated extensively along the coastal belt of south west Ceylon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and coconuts and coir were exported principally to India.[269] Cinnamon was the chief item exported in the Portuguese provinces of Ceylon. It was cinnamon that attracted the Portuguese to the island,[270] and the export of cinnamon was a monopoly of the colonists, with the collection of the cinnamon being entrusted to *Chaliyas,* the cinnamon-peeling caste, as in the days of the Sinhalese kings.[271] Portuguese policy was oppressive and tyrannical; cinnamon was gathered 'with a sword in hand and exported under the shadows of the guns.'[272]

As a commercial nation, the Dutch organized all the existing exports and also introduced new export items to the traditional list. They began to cultivate certain export commodities which had hitherto grown in the wild.

> The Dutch East India Company in Ceylon had monopolies over practically all the commodities in the Island Cinnamon which had been the bone of contention with the Portuguese was the most important export But pearls, elephants, pepper, areca nuts, jaggery, timber, arrack, choy-roots, cardamoms, and cinnamon oil received almost equal attention Coffee and indigo were cultivated but the export trade in these commodities was small '[273]

The Dutch did whatever they could to procure their commodities, for example, they had an agreement with Travancore Raja in India giving him the monopoly of the Jaffna tobacco trade in his domain. They received favorable pepper contracts in Travencore in return, but the Jaffna tobacco was subject to an export duty of 25%.[274] The pepper exported by the

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268 Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903,* p 49

269 Roberts, Michael and Wickremeratne, L A 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, vol III, The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p 91

270 Rajaratnam, S History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber, 1961, p 2

271 ibid , p 1

272 Tennent, *Ceylon,* vol II, p 164 ,quoted in Rajaratnam, S History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber, p 2

273 Perera, A B *Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon*, p 47

274 de Silva, Colvin R 'The Tobacco Trade in Ceylon 1796-1833', *Ceylon Literary*

Dutch East India Company came mainly from the Kandyan Kingdom. Cardamoms too came mainly from upcountry.[275] They introduced the export processing of cloth to Jaffna under the Company's monopoly.

Imports: In ancient times sandalwood, scents, musk, camphor and silk cloth and Kundalabharana were obtained from abroad.[276] Horses were one of the earliest imports to Ceylon, with records going back to the 2nd century BC.[277] Porcelain was another important item imported into Ceylon from very early times, China was the major source of imports, but there are remains of Roman and Islamic porcelain on the island [278] One of the chief imports of Ceylon from South India after the 10th century was rice [279] Under the Wet Zone civilization, rice was imported to the island from fairly distant regions like Burma.

> The import of rice from Burma must have increased considerably after the drift of the population from Raja Rata to the south-west After the abandonment of Raja Rata there was a significant change in the economy of Ceylon The Island which till then was more or less self-sufficient, began to depend on India for its essential needs As a result there must have been a general shortage of rice in the country '[280]

Other imports to the island included copper, opium, cloves, nutmeg, sandalwood and pepper, as well as some gold and silver coins, but these items were bought in small quantities and the bulk purchases included, in addition to rice, sugar from Bengal and cloth chiefly from Gujarat [281]

The following description provides an insight into what the island was importing through Colombo when the Portuguese arrived in Ceylon at the beginning of the 16th century.

> 'According to Barbossa, "the king of Ceilan resides in the city called Calmucho (Colombo in one version) which stands on the river with a great port wither sail

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Register (Third Series), vol I, no 10, October, 1931, p 434

[275] de Silva, S B D *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982, p 214

[276] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 74

[277] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon IV', p 21

[278] ibid , p 22

[279] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon II', p 200.

[280] ibid , p 201, quotes The Book of Francisco Rodrigues, pp 84-85 & The travels of Ludovico Varthema, Hakluty Series, Vol 32, pp 189-193 to support the argument

[281] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 101

> every year ships from diverse lands to take cargoes of cinnamon and bringing gold and silver, very fine camboy cloth and goods of many other kinds such as saffron, coral, quick silver and sinnabar, yet is their greatest profit in gold and silver for they are worth here more than elsewhere. Likewise many ships come from Bengal, coromandel and some from Malacca to buy elephants, cinnamon and jewels." '[282]

The Dutch imported rice and cloth from India and developed the coastwise trade, using Colombo as a center providing the other ports mainly with goods imported from foreign ports.[283] During the early British rule some illegal items such as ammunition were smuggled from the British-ruled territories to the Kandyan Kingdom [284]

Trade Relations: No doubt most of the exports in early times were bound for India. It is argued that the early Indian trade was more with North India than the much nearer South India.

> 'It is possible that Ceylon's earliest trade was more with North India than the South. This may have been due to the development of shipping and commerce by the Aryans earlier than the Tamils. Moreover the Aryan states of the earlier period attained a higher standard of material culture than that of the Tamils and consequently there would have been a readier market for the luxury goods of Ceylon in North India than in the South.'[285]

The trade relationship of Ceylon with the ports of the east coast of India is evident from the account given in the Pali chronicles and the Buddhaghosa Vinaya commentary on the voyage of Devanampiyatissa's envoys to Pataliputtra and their return to Ceylon via the port of Tamralipti in Lower Bengal, and a similar account left by the earlier Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian of his boat journey from Partaliputra to Tamralipti and his sea voyages from Tamralipti to Ceylon.[286] It is reasonable to conclude that the heaviest articles were mainly exported to neighboring India, whilst the lighter but more highly valuable articles and spices could have reached to East African coast, Middle East and Europe.

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[282] Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: I' p. 117; makes reference to The Book of Durate Barbosa, Hakluyt Series, Vol. 44, pp. 109-120.

[283] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography*,pp.63-65.

[284] de Silva, S. B. D. The *Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, pp. 14-15.

[285] Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: II', p. 193.

[286] Barua, Beni Madhab. *Ceylon Lectures· Studies on Sri Lanka Series No 5*, p. 12.

> The chief export to South India was elephants Elephants were in great demand by the rulers of Vijayanagara for use in their wars with the Muslim States of Decan The usual sources of elephants for India being in the hands of the Muslims, there must have been a very great demand for the Ceylon elephants '[287]

Mention is also made of Ceylonese trade with the south-east Asia from the ancient periods. Perera is pessimistic about this opinion, but he accepts that it could true of the mediaeval period.

> The trade between Ceylon and south-east Asia must have as a rule remained as a side show of the trade between the China and the West Moreover there were very few items which Ceylon could exchange with them as their products were the same During the 12th and 13th centuries however we get several references to trade between Ceylon and Burma, Cambodia and Sumatra '[288]

Ceylon had long had trading relations with the Maldives. Kandyan areca nuts were sent to Coromandel via the Maldives.[289] During the early British rule before the independent Sinhalese Kandyan kingdom was subjugated, there was a thriving trade between the colonial coastal regions of the country and other countries in the region, mainly with the Maldives and India [290]

Internal Trade: Shops and bazaars are mentioned at Anuradhapura, where aromatic drugs were sold in 204 BC; leather, perfumes, and camphor oil in 259 BC; a delicious fragrant scent made of jasmine flowers in 157 BC; sweet spices and a sugar-mill in 76 BC; also lamp-wicks made of silk, 19 BC. [291] Traders in ancient times traveled from village to village, selling articles of luxury; the articles they sold were scents and cosmetics and face powders beloved by ladies; the face powder was the golden colored powder of siriyal or yellow mercury sulphite [292] This trade was by no means as important a factor as agriculture, but it was certainly not negligible [293] The areca nut had become the mainstay of local trade, for the

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[287] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon II', p 202.

[288] Perera, B J 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon III', p 309

[289] de Silva, S B D The *Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p 214

[290] ibid , pp 14-15

[291] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, pp 42-43 The author makes reference to *Mahawamsa*

[292] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p 74

[293] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, 1987, p 53

Kotte peasants had become accustomed to pay for their requirements of cloth and salt in areca [294]

Knox said that there were no markets on the island, but there were a few shops in the cities were selling cloth, rice, salt, tobacco, limes, drugs, fruits, swords, steel, brass, copper etc [295] Pieris further elaborates on the trade.

> 'Knox states that there were no market in the mid-seventeenth century but the weekly fairs (*pola*) might well have existed There were very few Kandyan villages which have a bazaar attached to them The merchandise that existed in the few shops in the 'cities' of the seventeenth century included cloth, rice, salt, tobacco - by barter The prominent among the tradesmen were Muslims from the Indian coast who settle in the some of the sea ports and in settlements on the trade routes inland Chettiyars from South-India also ventured into the interior and set up boutiques in the villages '[296]

Knox mentions some of the commodities which were available in the Kandyan provinces in abundance. A certain number of them were available from the forest, and the others at the expense of human exertion.

> 'Ebony in great abundance, with choice of all and large Timber, Cardamoms, Jaggory, Rack Oyl, black Lead, Turmeric, Salt, Rice, Bettle-Nuts, Musk, Wax, Pepper, Which last grows here very well, and might be in great plenty if it had a Vend And the peculiar Commodity of the Island, Cinnamon, Wild Cattle and wild Honey in great plenty in the Woods; it lyes in holes or hollow Trees, free for any that will take the pains to get it Elephants Teeth, and Cotton of which there is good plenty, '[297]

Prohibitive regulation by the native monarch against trade with the Dutch provinces on political grounds restricted the natives in making a living from trading in the Kandyan kingdom.

> 'As for Commerce and Merchandize with Foreign Nations, there is little or nothing of that now exercised Indeed in the times when the Portugueze were on this Island and peace between them and the King, he permitted his People to go and Trade with them The which he would never permit them to do with the Hollander, tho they have much sought for it '[298]

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294 de Silva, Chandra Richard *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, p 207

295 Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 254

296 Pieris, Ralph 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p 68, Makes references to Hume Committee evidence, 1849-50, Vimalananda ed , 1970, cit supra, xxxi, James gay, 7/2/1817, (National Archives Sri Lanka 1, 21/111), and Robert Knox

297 Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp 147-148

298 ibid , p 252

The geographical diversity of the Kandyan kingdom seems to have produced most of the limited needs of people living there.

> '. one part of the Country affords, will not grow in the other. . one part or the other of this Land they have enough to sustain themselves, I think, with out the help of Commodities brought from any other Country...'[299]

The Muslims controlled much of the retail trade and were scattered throughout Ceylon.[300] According to Silva, they had a considerable impact on the ordinary people living in the Kandyan kingdom through the domestic trade and people were considerably involved with the trade.

> ' they [Moormen] bartered their goods for paddy, cattle and areca nuts. The moormen often pre-empted the paddy surplus before the harvest by advancing cloth and salt Sinhalese from the low country also engaged in the Kandyan trade Much of the trade with the Kandyan kingdom had been, for certain historical reasons, pre-empted by the Moors who before the intrusion of the Europeans were commercially dominant in the East '[301]

Economic Impact of Trade: Under the Sinhalese kings there was little trade and the economy of the village was in the main self-sufficient.[302] When the Portuguese first came to Ceylon the Kotte economy was basically one of subsistence agriculture, the limited external trade was largely in the hands of a small Muslim community concentrated in the port towns of Kotte and the other kingdoms of Ceylon.[303] Marshall says that the commerce of Ceylon was not materially altered until the discovery of the passage round the Cape (1479), when the Portuguese absorbed the trade of its principal production, and the maritime relations that had previously existed were, in a great measure, abolished[304] However, even the pre-British European rulers seem to have not greatly changed the traditional economic structure of the country. The Portuguese occupation of the maritime provinces did not introduce any far-reaching changes into the economy of the country; for the first time in the island's history, however,

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[299] ibid , p 252

[300] Mills, Lennox A *Britain and Ceylon*, Longmans Green and Co , London, 1945, p 10

[301] de Silva, S B D The *Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, 1982, p. 214.

[302] Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, p. 59

[303] de Silva, Chandra Richard *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*, p 1

[304] Marshall, Henry, M D '*Ceylon*', p 21

trade was accompanied by territorial acquisition [305] This was true of many aspects of the Dutch administration as well. The Dutch were as dictatorial as the Portuguese and the cinnamon trade in Ceylon was an important part of the Dutch East India Company's business, and its monopoly was secured by all possible means [306]

4.3.3 Transport and Communications

Transport and communications seem not have been so important in the life of ordinary people in the ancient periods, as they lived in almost self-sufficient villages. It is reasonable to assume that there were at least a few trunk roads in the ancient period. The old cities, especially the royal ones, were famous for their well-developed communication systems to cater to the needs of the day. de Silva says that, under the Polonnaruwa kingdom, there were well defined roads and cart tracks in Rajarata, along which trade moved to the interior [307] The ancient ruins testify that bridges were in use

> 'There was an ancient bridge twelve miles from Dambool made of blocks of granite, eight feet high, supporting horizontal slabs, seven feet long, four feet broad, and one feet thick '[308]

Ariyapala maintains that the country had a fairly well developed system of transport and communications to meet the existing internal and external trade [309] No doubt there was a clear differentiation between the mode of transport in use between the ordinary people and the few privileged.

More often, people walked long distances; travelers usually carried with them an umbrella, a stick, a vessel for liquids and a sack made of cloth. They also carried their cooked rice well pressed down in a bag of rushes or leaves, *Batmula* [310] The ordinary man's mode of travel was walking and it was the practice to take provisions for the way - especially a *batmula* or a

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[305] Rajaratnam, S History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber, 1961, p 2

[306] Pieris, *Ceylon under the Hollanders*, p 51, quoted in Rajaratnam, S History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber, 1961, p 3

[307] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 100

[308] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, p 53

[309] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 343

[310] de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 74-75

packet of rice and curry [311] The building of rest houses at certain intervals was a boon to the weary travelers [312] These were local rest houses or *ambalams,* where no food or beverages were supplied, but consisted only of small huts erected at the wayside for travelers and serving as a meeting point for the nearby locals. Knox says 'In this Country are no Inns to go to, and therefore their manner when they Travel is, to carry ready what provisions they can...' he continues 'Oggulas another sort of sweet-meats, made of parched Rice, Jaggery, Pepper, Cardamum and a little cinnamon. They rowl them up in Balls, which will grow hard. These they tie up in bags and carry them with them when they travail to eat in afternoons when they are hungry.'[313] Although this refers to the seventeenth century, the basic structure of the mode of transport had changed little since the ancient periods. The following gives a hint of what would have been the ordinary man's transport a few centuries before Knox.

> ' The poorer people seem to have used a cart drawn by bullocks The villager had his own form of transport, the pingo (*kada*) It was used in his small business or trade to carry goods - vegetables or any other stuff for sale. ... man was also used as a beast of burden He carried the goods in bags and boxes '[314]

The affluent members of society seem to have used beasts or carriages drawn by beasts. W. A. De Silva says that, when merchants traveled, they rode on horses, carriages drawn by horses, carts drawn by bulls and yahan or sedan chairs [315] Ariyapala says the following about traditional forms of transport and communication.

> The chief means of transport was no doubt the cart and chariot, drawn by bullocks merchandise was transported in carts drawn by bullocks The richer and higher classes of society seem to have gone about in chariots drawn by horses, whose number perhaps depended on the wealth and status of the owners On festive occasions these chariots were beautifully decorated the people also rode on horses and elephants this mode of travel was perhaps a luxury of the highest order, and may have been used on festive occasions '[316]

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311 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 344-345

312 ibid , pp 343-344

313 Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp 156, 238

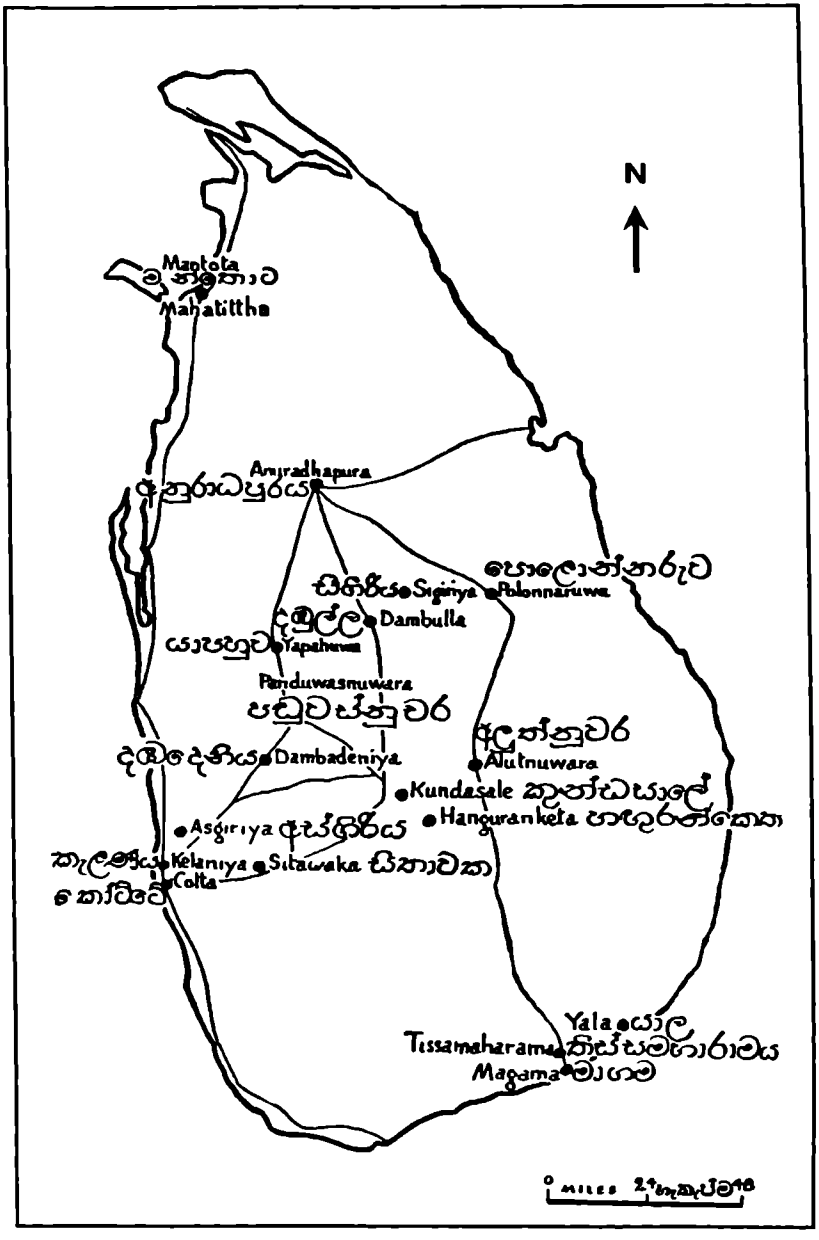
314 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p 345

315 de Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 74-75

316 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon,* pp. 344-345, A rough idea of the mode of transport in ancient times might be deduced from the traditional 'fourfold army' in India and Ceylon It consisted of elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers

MAP 4

Chief Ruined Cities and Ancient Roads of Ceylon according to the Mahawansa



Source Elsie K Cook (1931) *Ceylon Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev by K Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953

In addition to land transport, river and sea transport are also mentioned. The use of boats (*oru*), barges (*pasu*), rafts (*pahuru*), double canoes (*angulu*)[317], and padav (a kind of boat) is mentioned and the sea transport seems to have been quite well developed, marine navigation seems have been quite common from very early times.[318] Writing as a means of communications seems to have been known. Some forms of writing were used in the earliest times. Vijaya seems to have sent letters to India. These letters were sent through messengers.[319] By the twelfth century the thickly wooded nature of the country prevented operations by organised units of elephants, chariots or cavalry.[320] This is a good indication that the country had lost it old road network by this time.

In the Kandyan kingdom there were no permanent roads and paths had to be hacked through forests when the chiefs went on circuit.[321] The lack of a proper transport system seriously affected the remotely situated villages. When paddy was abundant it was difficult to sell, while the price was extraordinarily high at a time of crop failure. The main mode of transport, the pack bullocks, were the monopoly of the Moorish-dominated transport department, the *madige*.[322] Henry Marshall describes the roads and communication system in the native kingdom as follows.

> 'The roads in the island and upper country were, during the native government, chiefly narrow paths, by which men on foot might pass singly, climbing over the rocks, and penetrating through the thickets in the best way they could. The bullocks, the common bullock burden, even with a light load, were with great difficulty able to get over the precipitous parts of some of the passes. There being little or no trade in the country, roads for wheel-carriages were not required; indeed, making roads was discouraged by government.'[323]

Despite these poor transport facilities, the natives are said to be have been engaged in commercial intercourse with the maritime provinces, even in the early eighteenth century.

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317 Double canoes were used by Britons to travel in Ceylon. For example, William Knight, describes a trip to Adam's peak in the early 1840s as follows: 'The boat consisted of two canoes about five feet apart , connected by small platform of split bamboos on which we might sit, or lie, or stand, as suited our convenience or our taste.' see: Knighton, William. *The History of Ceylon,* p. 382

318 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, p. 345.

319 ibid., p. 346.

320 Codrington, H. W. *A Short History of Ceylon,* p. 69

321 Pieris,Ralph.'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations ....',p. 68.

322 ibid., p 64

323 Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p. 3.

> The movement of people between the Kandyan kingdom and the rest of the country was not exclusively a one-way traffic. At the time of the British embargo on salt, the Kandyans, besides trading the slatterns in the vicinity, ventured out into the maritime districts to purchase salt and salt fish '[324]

The Dutch developed communications by constructing a number of canals for internal transport and they relied heavily on this system of transport.[325] The rivers were not favorable for navigation, except near the sea, where they expanded into estuaries, which were taken advantage of by the Dutch for the construction of their system of canals all round the western and southern coasts [326] They used the traditional *rajakaria* to construct canals as well as roads, bridges and *ambalams* or local rest houses [327] The introduction of canal system to Ceylon is credited to the Dutch. However, there had been canals built by Sinhalese kings before them. The Negombo Canal was originally the work of a Sinhalese king of Kotte.[328] Panditaratna makes the following comment on the development of communication in the provinces under Dutch rule

> The Dutch road-canal system provided the framework for the future communication network The Colombo-Galle and the Colombo-Negombo Roads were the major arteries The Kelani-Kalu gangas and their tributaries were linked together by a canal system The Puttalam-Negombo canals via Kelani Ganga to Beira lakes and the Panadura Ganga-Bolgoda canal serve the northern and southern areas of Colombo respectively The Colombo lake ('the Beira') was improved for navigation and made into an inland harbour for barges and other small vessels The development of the hinterland and the opening up of the communications increased the flow of people and food supplies towards Colombo'[329]

4.4 Summary and Conclusions

In the ancient civilization the whole country was predominantly under one ruler and the society was influenced mainly by neighboring India. This

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[324] de Silva, S B D The *Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p 217

[325] Karunatilake, H N S 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p 42 and Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 4

[326] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903*, p 8

[327] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 190

[328] ibid , p 190

[329] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, pp. 65-67

period came to an end with the dawn of the thirteenth century. The Sinhalese kingdom shifted to the Wet Zone and was disunited and had more than one ruler, except for a short spell of time and became exposed to European influence, first in the form of trade and later under direct rule. The Portuguese and the Dutch in their turn managed to rule only the maritime provinces and only the British succeeded in bringing the entire country under their control at the beginning of the 19th century. The Portuguese and the Dutch administration are widely considered to have been a continuation of the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms, as their influence was trifling in transforming the traditional socio-economic order.

From the arrival of the Aryans in 6th century BC, the basic social grouping was the 'village'. Family ties were strong, but co-operation, mutual help, sharing of sorrow and fortunes extended beyond the family members to all inhabitants in the village and, in certain circumstances, to neighboring villages as well. The monarch exercised his influence on the village through his officials.

Agriculture, mainly paddy for the consumption, was instrumental for the economic prosperity of the island. Literally every member of society was a tiller until the Muslim immigrant community permanently settled in the island. Industries and many other trades had not been developed into separate branches and all the people employed in these trades were partially cultivators. A number of trades survived not because of their economic competency, but because of royal patronage.

Village communities were self sufficient and trade was confined mainly to luxuries and very essential consumer articles, such as salt, which were not available locally. Exchange was basically barter, although money had been in use since early days. Exports were confined to few items, which were gifts of the nature rather than the fruits of human dexterity. The shift from the irrigation civilization to the Wet Zone added new items to the export basket, some of which necessitated a certain amount of human exertion. In the ancient period, ordinary people had few avenues for earning money income through involvement in trade, since they could not produce anything that was exported in this period. In the Wet Zone civilization, ordinary people did produce some of the exports in their gardens and so they could participate in trade and earn a little income. However, both in the ancient period and in the pre-European Wet Zone civilization, the village economy had not been subjected to any structural change. It was basically a self-contained, mono clan unit.

In the traditional village, people had very limited needs, the most important of them being food and clothing. Rice or paddy cultivation was the first priority and the entire civilization, both in ancient and mediaeval

times, critically depended on it. When paddy could not be cultivated sufficiently due to natural factors or otherwise, people turned to slash and burn for the cultivation of other grains, although they still preferred paddy. Vegetables were grown as a subsidiary to rice or other grains and were used as curries to eat with rice. A great majority of the sweetmeats consumed by the people were produced with rice flour.

Meat, fish, dairy products and fruit were not consumed regularly, at least by the majority of people. Although cattle and oxen were abundant, they were kept mainly as beasts of burden or by cultivators for ploughing and threshing. The ordinary drink was water and neither fruit drinks nor other stimulants were widely in use. Intoxicants were used from very early times and seem to have been consumed by a very small sector of society. The chewing of betel was a universal practice, while smoking is not mentioned as an ordinary practice.

The privileged members of society had commodious and comfortable houses, but ordinary people lived in thatched huts. Literally no furniture was used by the ordinary people, but there were a few pieces in the houses of upper class. Every house had basic kitchen utensils, and oil extracted from different kinds of seeds collected from the gardens or nearby woods was used for lighting.

Health and hygiene were fairly advanced. Most of the people had a basic knowledge of the traditional treatments, although they went to traditional physicians for serious cases. Medicines were virtually herbs collected around the living environment. Most males spent their free time in the village restaurant or *ambalama* discussing matters pertaining to agriculture and court affairs. Transport and communication in the countryside was very limited and it was not found necessary to developed that facility.

Agriculture, livestock and fishing and hunting were the major sources of food consumption in the country. Since the exchange mechanism and international trade were underdeveloped, all the producers produced mainly for their own consumption. This is somewhat similar to the highly abstract, simple closed economy model in the macroeconomic literature. Where the existing limited exchange mechanism is based mainly on the barter system, the possibility of expanding a country's production capacity is very limited.

PART THREE

CHANGES IN CONSUMPTION IN THE BRITISH PERIOD

A number of reasons are given for the direct intervention of the western nations in Ceylon's affairs. The strategic location in the Eastern seas and the more congenial climatic conditions for Europeans were among the reasons that prompted them to keep Ceylon under their occupation.[1] The British captured Colombo from the Dutch with their commerce in 1796.[2] The real importance of Ceylon was then recognized in its close proximity to India and its consequent indispensability for the defense of India and other British interests in the region. British rule up to 1815 was not very eventful, because the original agreement was to give it back to the Dutch; but Britain finally decided to keep Ceylon and give Java to the Dutch after it conquered the Kandyan kingdom.[3] Under the Treaty of Amiens, all the British conquests overseas were restored to France, Spain and the United Provinces, except for Trinidad (Spanish) and the Dutch settlement in Ceylon.[4] The British gained full control over the country in 1818 after the suppression of the rebellion which was aimed at overthrowing their power.[5]

At the time of the British occupation of the Kandyan kingdom, the maritime provinces had already experienced about three and a half centuries of close association with western nations.[6] During the Portuguese and the Dutch periods there was at least one native kingdom in part of the country. It was only the British in 1815 who succeeded in bringing the entire island under their administration. They began to establish in Ceylon

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[1] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, pp. 2-4.

[2] *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964*, Published on the Occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the Ceylon Camber of Commerce, Colombo, 1964, p. 2.

[3] Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p. 40.

[4] Perera, A. B. 'Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon', p. 49.

[5] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 4.

[6] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p. 66.

a modern centralized form of government to which they were accustomed in their own country and established a common system of law for the whole island, bringing all persons under the rule of law and making them all equal in its sight.[7] By 1838 Colombo had become the capital city of the entire island.[8] It remained the seat of colonial administration and commercial center of the island throughout the British period.

At the end of the 19th century, the island had been divided into nine provinces for administrative purposes.[9] The provinces, except North-Central and Uva, were subdivided into districts.[10] The Government Agent (GA) was at the head of the provincial administration and he administered the central district of the province; the outlying districts were kept under the charge of Assistant Government Agents(AGAs).[11] The officer next subordinate to the Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent was chief native headman. He was referred to differently in the regions: 'Mudaliyar' in maritime Sinhalese districts, 'Ratemahatmaya' in the Kandyan districts, 'Maniagar', 'Adigar', or 'Vanniya' in the Tamil districts.[12] There were occasions on which the Mudaliyar was assisted by 'Muhandirams.' The chief native headman was followed by the superior headman, called 'Vidane Arachchi' in the maritime Sinhalese districts, 'Korala' in the Kandyan Sinhalese districts and 'Udaiyar' in the Tamil districts. Last in the administration hierarchy was the 'village headman', who was in charge of one or more villages.[13]

According to the first official census held under the British in 1824, the total population of the island was 851,940.[14] The population lived predominantly in rural areas. The situation in the island in the early days of British rule was similar to that in most of the other tropical dependencies,[15] And the economy of the people was on the whole agrarian.[16] The societies

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[7] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 5.

[8] Panditaratna, B. L. 'The Port-capital City of Colombo: A Geographical Interpretation', p. 141

[9] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 84.

[10] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, H. R. Cottle, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1922, p. 25; The nine provinces were: the Western, the Central, the Southern, the Northern, the Eastern, the North-Western, the North-Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa.

[11] Administration Reports, A Letter by the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland on 26th September, 1882, CO: 57/87/1882.

[12] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 25.

[13] ibid., p. 25.

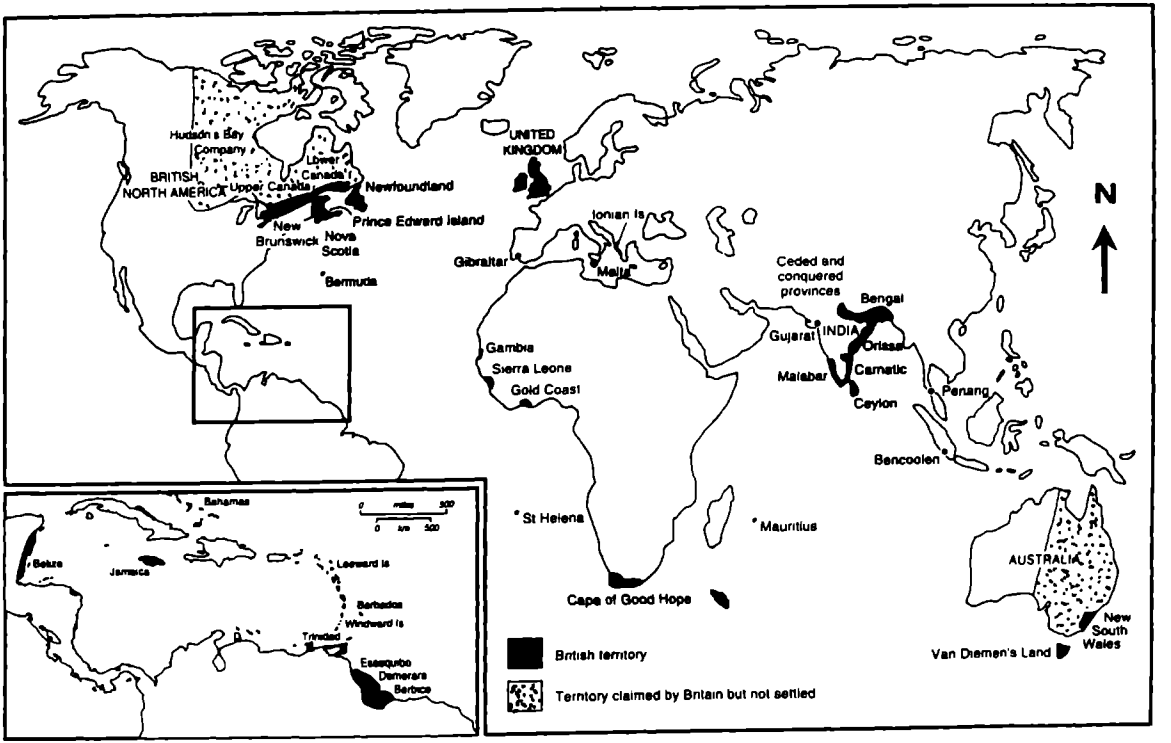
[14] Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p. 54.

[15] Mills, Lennox A. *Britain and Ceylon*, p. 46.

[16] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p 5

MAP 5

The British Empire in 1815



Adapted Source: Wim, Roger Louis (ed. in-chief). *The Oxford History of the British Empire,* vol. ii, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

of maritime districts, however, had experienced considerable changes under the Portuguese and the Dutch, which had left the people of coastal districts better prepared than the people of the rest of the island to benefit from developments brought about under the British.[17]

No fundamental changes were immediately introduced even when British power was extended to cover the entire island in 1815 and, as late as the end of the third decade of the 19th century, the Ceylonese economy was basically still overwhelmingly feudal in nature,[18] so that the economic stagnation continued in the country until the 1830s, when the gradual success of coffee culture revolutionized the economy.[19] Coffee cultivation, the first kind of major capitalistic form of enterprise in Ceylon, transformed the traditional economic structure. The stumbling blocks to the progress of coffee in Ceylon were completely removed by 1837 and the reasons for the sudden arrival of the crop indicate the main channels along which its influence flowed to erode the ancient feudal structure.[20]

It is from this point in history that the decay of the mediaeval economy becomes most apparent.[21] The 1840s were a period of progress and the beginning of economic diversification.[22] The expansion of the coffee plantations in the country from the 1840s to the 1870s created profound changes in the economy. New towns, roads, bridges and the sheltered port of Colombo came on the rising tide of the coffee culture; and a banking system, engineering workshops, hotels and departmental stores and a flood of imported goods followed.[23] The modern 'export economy' was fully established in the country before the end of the nineteenth century with the growth of the coffee industry.[24] The demise of coffee was followed by tea as the major plantation crop and later on rubber became a partner of this culture.

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[17] ibid. p. 4.

[18] Vandendriesen, I. H. 'Some Trends in the Economic History of Ceylon in the 'Modern' Period', *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January-June 1960. p. 2. Makes reference to C. R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation-1796-1833* and Mills. *Ceylon under the British.*

[19] de Silva, K. M. 'Historical Survey', in K. M. de Silva (ed.) *Sri Lanka: A Survey*, C. Hurst & Company, London, 1977, p. 64.

[20] Vandendriesen, I. H. 'Some Trends in the Economic History of Ceylon in the 'Modern' Period', pp. 3-4.

[21] ibid. p. 4.

[22] Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p. 44.

[23] *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964*, p. 2.

[24] Corea, Gamini. *The Instability of an Export Economy*. Marga Institute, Colombo, 1975, p. 1.

MAP 6

Provinces, Districts, Chief Towns of Ceylon-1953

Source: Elsie K. Cook (1931). *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev. by K. Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953.

The coconut plantation, as a centuries-old companion of the subsistence rural economy, was also put onto a commercial footing The influence of the modern economy was not equally dispensed throughout the country, although each and every part received some sort of influence

> ' [P]ace at which capitalist forms of production and exchange extended themselves was regionally uneven and regionally differentiated The dry zone lowlands were brought within the ambit of a market society at a much slower rate Several localities within the wet zone were so isolated as to be *relatively* insulated from these developments ' [25]

As a part of this transformation process, the traditional consumption practices of the country went through a remarkable change, what we refer here as 'changes in consumption pattern' (**see Chapter 3 : *Changes in consumption pattern & underdevelopment***) In the following three chapters we shall examine the important changes which affected consumption patterns in British Ceylon A number of imported new articles were added to the native's consumer basket during the period, while many locally made articles were replaced by imported substitutes The traditional simple man's limited consumption horizon was expanded He was transformed from a person comparatively limited and satiable wants to one with unlimited and unsatiable wants As a whole, the dependency on foreign sources for consumer articles reached an unprecedented level during this period

Our discussions in the following chapters are more lengthy and elaborate than the similar issues discussed in Chapter four Instead of being confined to consumption itself, we have extended the discussion to peripheral areas, in order to discern whether the development process was conditioned by changing consumption patterns or some other factors

The reader will find here in many instances a number of similar references to support the same arguments This is a deliberate exercise rather than inadvertent repetition and has been done with a view to giving representation to different localities in the island This will be quite obvious when we deal with the provincial or district administration reports, from which we glean much light These reports in many instances represent the local rather than the national interests

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[25] Roberts, Michael Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p 147

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Grain in British Ceylon

This chapter examines the changes brought about in the grain culture of island under British rule. The main focus is on the changes in rice and fine grain consumption. Among staple foods, rice was considered as superior to all others. The economy of island had been centered around rice cultivation since its remotest past until it was finally replaced by plantation crops under the British. Nonetheless, the Ceylonese never relied heavily on rice consumption as shown chapter four. The latter was strongly supported by fine grain and, to a considerable extent, by other foodstuffs such as yams, vegetables, fruits, fish and wild products. The non-cereal foodstuffs will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

5.1 Foodstuffs: *breaking ground*

Foods come first in any society. In the past when man was under the strong control of natural phenomena, more time and energy had to be expended on the procurement of this basic necessity of life than today. The quantity, quality and variety of food consumption was much more a function of natural forces than of human exertion in this harsh, ancient world. Ceylonese society was not exempt from this general rule.

> 'Natives of the interior for the most part subsist upon vegetable and farinaceous diet. Dried fish and dried deer flesh are used as condiment in the seasoning of their dishes. Of animal food, with the exception of the flesh of a few wild animals, they consume but little. Rice is their staff of life. Kurakkan, as a seed which is ground into flour, they also use in addition to coconuts, yams, sweet potatoes and the fruit of the jak-tree. These with a few green vegetables and chilies for their curries, comprise the whole to which they give any attention in the way of cultivation, unless we except the coffee tree and the areca nut tree,

> which grow without any care whatever bestowed upon them about their dwellings.'[1]

The basic structure of the diet seems not to have changed considerably even decades after these remarks were made. The principal necessities of life were considered to be grain, curry stuffs, salt fish, vegetables, salt and cotton goods for the average unskilled agricultural laborer in 1893 and this would have been roughly the consumer budget for an agricultural or urban worker even in 1915.[2]

Inhabitants of the island belonged to three major categories as villagers (rural people), Indian estate laborers and the bazaar (urban) people in most of the British period. The food of estate laborers and bazaar people '...consists principally of Indian rice, dried fish, coconuts from the low-country, and similar provisions.'[3] This was much more similar to what the villager consumed. In the early days of British rule, when Europeans traveled through the countryside or put up in one place for a considerable period of time, they too had to be mostly satisfied (or unsatisfied) with the local menus. The following is one of such occasions. 'For the first week or two I had some doubts as to whether I could hold out for some months on the national diet of curry and rice. I went through the same experience as Goethe did with the muddy Merseburg beer at Leipsic, at first I could hardly eat it, and at last I could hardly bear to part from it.'[4]

5.2 Rice: *staff of life*

It should certainly be remarked that the rice was the chief support of life and that all the others, grain or roots, were wretched substitutes.[5] It was the main product of peasant agriculture and the main article of the peasant's diet.[6] 'The staple production of the Sinhalese is *paddy*, of which 11

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[1] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 33.

[2] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors* Ph.D. thesis submitted to the London School of Economics and Political Science, May 1964, p. 110 (footnotes); makes reference to Report of Silver Currency Commission S. P. 6 of 1894, p. 4.

[3] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/99/1886.

[4] Haeckel, Ernst. 'A Visit to Ceylon', Clara Bell (trans.), *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd., Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1975, p. 155.

[5] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p. 131.

[6] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp. 321-322; makes reference to the Kandyan Peasantry

different kinds are known.'[7] Paddy cultivation was the most general, favorite and honorable occupation of Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamils, although in many districts garden culture - fruits and roots - was more profitable.[8] '...I am confident that, without rice, the population of that country could not exist for two months. The high price of this grain is a matter of far greater distress in Ceylon, and all India, than the high price of wheat in England.'[9] 'A frequent economic cause of violent protest was shortages or increase in the price of rice . In 1866, a failure of the Indian rice crop on which Ceylon depended, led to famine conditions in the island and to rioting in the capital. Crowds of hungry people demonstrated in Colombo and destroyed property, resulting in military action and the loss of lives. In 1897, a sharp increase in the price of rice led to rioting in Chilaw between the shop keepers and customers.'[10] Rice has been the main pillar of the country's socio-economic structure. 'The social beliefs, customs and institutions were closely integrated with the system of paddy production A well-integrated and self sufficient social and economic system, well adapted to certain ecological factors, evolved.'[11]

Although rice was said to be very important to the native's life, there were regional variations of its consumption. 'There is perhaps no part in the Island in which rice forms so little the staple of food for the inhabitants as the Galle District, its place is supplied by yams, sweet potatoes, jak and bread- fruit, with fish. Yet, as a rule the people are strong and able-bodied..'[12] Similarly in certain parts of the Mannar district palmyra

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Commission, p 77

[7] Lewis, R E 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p 33, The eleven paddy varieties the author referred are, Ratkunda, Ballanwani, Marlawarige, Kallu Kombilli, Tattuwal, Hinnati, Sudu hinnati, Mudu-kirel, Kuru-vi, Balla Ma-vi and Dassanel

[8] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, Asian Educational Services, 1994, p 44

[9] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 119

[10] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p 16, makes reference to *Ceylon Independent* 15 August 1906 and *Ceylon Examiner* 30 December 1897, here the author mentions that not only the high price of rice, but also the imposition of taxes contributed to this discontent.

[11] Sarkar, N K and Thambiah, S J *The Disintegrating Village*, Part 1, Colombo, University of Ceylon Press Board, 1957, pp xi-xii, quotation in Barrie M Morrison, M P Moore, and M U Ishak Lebbe, (eds) *The Disintegrating Village*, Lake House Investments Ltd , Colombo, 1976, p 4

[12] Administration Reports, Galle District, CO 57/41/1867, Two decades after the publication of this report, rice consumption per head in the Galle district increased to five and quarter bushels per annum Four bushels of which were locally grown rice and the rest consisted of imported rice See Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/99/1886

products played a leading role in dietary patterns. 'In Mannar Island the quantity of rice consumed will be much less...as in Mannar West Division the staple food of the people is fish and "Punaddu" and other produce of the palmyra palm. Fish is always abundant and the thousands of palmyra palms yield "Punaddu" (the dried juice of palmyra fruit), "takan" (pulp inside the germinated seed), "ma" (a flour made from dried palmyra roots), jaggery, and toddy.' [13] In Kurunegala district vegetables, fish and meat were important. 'The food of the natives of this district consists almost entirely of vegetables and fish, but they are consumers of game occasionally, which is fairly abundant, such as wild pig, deer, hares ...'[14] In drier parts of the island *Kurakkan* was the general food. 'I am sorry to say, that the general food of the people is not rice, but *kurakkan* (*Eleusine coracana*) which is grown in chénas.' [15] As in the northern drier districts, it was also true in the southern Matara and Hambantota Districts.[16]

'The cultivation of paddy is of two kinds: sowing upon cleared land and upon the hillside, and the sowing in swamp where the land has been prepared by irrigation.'[17] The former is called hill paddy and the latter swamp or field paddy. In the wetter parts, swamp paddy was cultivated mainly from rainwater and, in the drier parts, with the help of irrigation tanks and channels. The productivity in swamp paddy appears to have been moderate. 'In paddy cultivation, the return is rarely over fifteen fold; seldom so much: the cultivation is expensive and laborious.'[18]

The return from hill paddy cultivation, when land is of moderate quality and the season is propitious, is generally tenfold.[19] After the harvest 'The grain, or paddy, is stored in mud walled barns, which are raised on stone pedestals, like our corn stacks. '[20] Lewis further elaborates on the native's barn; 'In the Kandyan country paddy is frequently stored, in a round place elevated by single stones from the ground, in the manner ricks are preserved from vermin at home, and for the same purpose. This is built of wattled sticks and plastered with clay and cow dung inside and out, and

[13] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/143/1900.

[14] Administration Reports, North Western Province, Kurunegala, CO: 57/51/1870; here the vegetables would have been jak and bread-fruit.

[15] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p. 145.

[16] Wijesinhe, J. E. Food Production in the Southern Province, *The National Monthly of Ceylon*, vol. V, no. 10&11, Aug.-Sept., 1918 , p. 203.

[17] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 34.

[18] Administration Reports, A letter by the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland (26th Sept. 1882), CO: 57/87/1882

[19] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', pp. 40-41.

[20] Marshall, Henry, M. D. '*Ceylon*', p. 5

thatched; it is seldom larger than a full sized water-butt.'[21] 'Rice is prepared from paddy by the removal of the outer husk.'[22] 'Two bushels of paddy are usually taken to answer one bushel of rice.'[23] The removal of the outer husk was done by pounding in a mortar 'It is usually done by the women, who if they do the work for a large grower, receive a share of the resulting rice for their work.'[24] 'Nearly all rice is first soaked and then boiled in the husk before it is converted from paddy into rice, the raw rice in its natural form being hardly even eaten with curry, but only used for making for flour and a kind of milky pudding eaten in the early morning with the cup of coffee.'[25]

5.3 Native Rice Consumption: *below the minimum.*

It was widely believed by the natives that a full-grown male consumed a measure of rice a day.[26] This seems to have taken for granted by nearly all of the British administration officers and writers on colonial affairs. 'There are 20 males (full-grown) in the village, and the total population is 65. Allowing a full measure of rice a day for a each man, 3/4 for each woman, and 1/2 for each child, this gives rice alone sufficient last for 130 days, besides kurakkan and other foodstuffs.'[27] Ferguson maintained that each estate laborer consumed one bushel of rice per month, which was equal to one measure of rice a day.[28] A part of the immigrant estate laborer's wage was paid in rice by the planter. In the early years of the twentieth century, the rice given per week was for 'men, 1/4 bushel each, women 1/4 and 1/8

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[21] Lewis, R E 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p 50

[22] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', In Plate Compiled *Ceylon Its History, People, Commerce, Industry and Resources* Plate Limited, Colombo, 1924, pp 99-100

[23] Administration Reports, Northern Province-Mullaitive, CO 57/147/1901

[24] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', pp 99-100 There was a paddy pounding class in Jaffna although it was not common to all other districts See Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO, 57 /199 /1918

[25] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO 57/93/1884 To make boiled rice, the paddy is first soaked, boiled and dried before the separation from the husk This pre-boiled rice is once again boiled with water before being eaten with dishes The paddy husked without the said process is called raw rice The consumption of pre-boiled rice seems to have been a long standing tradition in the island Knox says 'Rice must be boyled in the husk ' see Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 112 However, raw rice is now widely consumed in some southern districts in the island

[26] Even now, probably most Ceylonese hold a similar opinion

[27] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO 57/93/1884

[28] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p 99

each on alternate weeks and young working boys and girls, 1/8 of a bushel each '[29] The weekly ration of the adult male here is nearly one measure per day The planter appears to have accepted that an adult labor would consume a measure of rice a day In reality, the rice ration which the estate laborer received exceeded his needs and the surplus was exchanged for his other needs

One inquisitive administration officer went against the popular notion of daily rice consumption A survey he conducted challenged the long-standing belief 'I have been making some interesting enquiries to-day as to the quantities of rice and kurakkan required for the consumption of natives of this district, and I am astonished at their capacity for the disposal of food I could not believe it when Kobeygane Ratemahatmaya and two or three other headmen assured me that one measure per day of rice was the ordinary allowance for each adult '[30] The writer after interviewing a number of natives and collecting their food consumption statistics reached the following conclusion about the monthly consumption 'The allowance for prisoners in the jail, all adults, is 2/3rds of a measure per day, also 20 measures per month, but this is low in proportion The people present today all say that an adult male will eat a measure of rice a day Kurakkan goes nearly twice as far, being so much more satisfying and indigestible So, I may, I think, safely take as a basis for all calculations in this district the rate of consumption per head of the population as nineteen measures of rice (thirty-eight of paddy), when rice is exclusively eaten, and 12 measures of kurakkan when kurakkan is exclusively eaten'[31] Therefore, the quantity of ' paddy required per head of the population is equal to about thirty-eight measures per month This comes to say, fifteen bushels of paddy per head per annum, equal to seven and half bushels of rice The consumption of kurakkan in like manner, when that grain is used, is four and half bushels per head per annum '[32] This calculation seems very reasonable, although it was pretty contrary to the popular belief of the island

The above calculation reveals the potential amount of consumption, but this would have differed from the actual consumption, since the latter was always smaller than the former if rice had been consumed exclusively However, certainly it had regional variations since some districts produced

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[29] Thiagaraja, K Indian Coolies in Ceylon Estates ' *The Indian Review* March, 1917, p 181, quoted in Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p 210

[30] Administration Reports, North Western Province (Appendix A), No 51 Food Statistics, CO 57/66/1875

[31] ibid

[32] Administration Reports, North Western Province (Appendix A), No 53 -Food Statistics, resumed from No 51, CO 57/66/1875

excess rice than their needs. The gap between potential and actual consumption had to be bridged by other foodstuffs. The Matara district administration report records '...giving total annual consumption of rice per head of three or four bushels, while such other produce as fine grain, yams, jak fruit,... make up the remaining and greater portion of the food-supply consumed.'[33] As chena crops, garden products were much more important to the native for his daily diet. No official records are available for garden products but 'It was not unreasonable to assume that the mass of the people especially in the rural areas consumed great quantities of this type of foods. ... as an ultimate possibility, were the resources of food that were available in jungles. ... Above all there was also the belief that as a general rule the mass of the people could manage to exist on very little.'[34]

It is speculated that the native's average rice consumption had increased in the 19th century. 'In the early part of the century, the average Sinhalese countryman consumed, probably, only half the quantity of rice (supplemented by fruit and vegetables) which he is now able to afford.'[35] At the end of the first quarter of 20th century, the average native was consuming less than his potential rice consumption. The per head average rice consumption of the island for the year 1922 stood at 4 1/2 bushels.[36] After more than a century of the British rule, the actual annual rice consumption was less than the potential consumption by 40 per cent if rice was consumed exclusively. The native seems have not fully satisfied his rice needs even if we make some reservation here for women and children, and other subsidiary foods.[37] However, it is reasonable to say that the per head average rice consumption of the native increased during the period.

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[33] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO: 57/99/1886.

[34] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in the late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p. 41; makes reference to; Report on the Kegalla District, A. R. 1890. p. J.23. Report on the Vavuniya District, A. R. 1892, p. D.22. Report on the Uva Province, A. R. 1887,p. 212A. Report on the Mullaitivu District, A. R. 1873, p. 196. Report on the Badulla District, A. R. 1884, p. 58A.

[35] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883*, p. 43.

[36] Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', In Plate Compiled, *Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industry and Resources*. Plate Limited, Colombo, 1924, p. 84.

[37] The native normally had three meals a day as breakfast, lunch and dinner. Rice seems to have been the first preference for all the three meals if it was procurable.

5.4 Rice Imports: *diversion to foreign sources*

5.4.1 Ever Widening Imports

It is said that the island was self-supporting in foodstuffs in ancient times. 'In ancient times there can be no doubt that the island supported a population at least five times as great as it now does [in 1845], and that, too, when it was exporting grain to the continent...'[38] The story of grain exports in the past is a disputed fact (**see Chapter 4: *rice***). Nonetheless, this prosperity had been vanished long before the arrival of the Europeans. 'Whether or not Ceylon was in ancient times the granary of south-eastern Asia, certain it is that long before the Portuguese or Dutch, not to speak of British era, that conditions had lapsed, and so far from the island having a surplus of food products, the British, like their European predecessors, had to import a certain quantity of rice from Southern India to feed their troops and the new population of the capital generally.'[39] However, it is maintained that only the maritime provinces were importing a small quantity of food when the British occupied those areas.[40] At the beginning of the 19th century the Kandyan provinces were producing a food surplus.[41] The quite interesting fact of the early British period was that '...the value of grain imported annually was never less than half the value of the total goods exported. Sometimes it exceeded the total value of goods exported, as in 1813, when it was nearly double.'[42] 'In these days [1817], the value of rice imported, exceeded always the half of the value of the all the goods exported and in some occasions surpassed the whole of them.'[43] Even in 1839 imports of rice and other grains were valued at more than a third of the total exports of the island.[44] The rice was imported in great quantities from the Indian peninsula, as the amount of paddy cultivated in the island was not adequate for the sustenance of the inhabitants.[45]

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[38] Knighton, William *The History of Ceylon,* p 363

[39] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883,* p 38.

[40] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* p 329

[41] Ameer Ali, A C M 'Rice and Irrigation in 19th Century Sri Lanka', *The Ceylon Historical Journal,* vol xxv, nos 1-4, October, 1978, p 258, makes reference to Bertolacci, p 71

[42] *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964,* p 14

[43] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* p 119, our words within brackets

[44] *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964,* p 15

[45] Marshall, Henry, M D *'Ceylon'*, p 5, Much of the rice imported into the island came

The danger of importing rice into the island was pointed out in the early days of the British administration. 'The money which is every year sent out of the island to purchase grain being retained in it, in consequence a sufficient quantity of that commodity being produced within itself for its own consumption, would tend to the rapid increase of its wealth, and consequently of its improvement.'[46] It would not have been very difficult to arrest the adverse situation if corrective initiatives had been taken in those early days. '. . now, however, a large annual importation of rice meets a rapid sale, at very fluctuating prices, an evil which the Government could prevent by renewing the embankments of very few of the tanks, and, in a short time, Ceylon, instead of importing, would be exporting, large quantities of grain.'[47] However, these were not the priorities in the colonial agenda of the day.

Long-term foreign investment began to flow in freely for coffee cultivation from the early 1840s.[48] This was followed by high demand for rice to feed the immigrant laborers and the increasing local population, and in response to the growth of the urban population and rising incomes. When the coffee plantations were started, the island was not wholly self-sufficient, and imported rice supplemented that locally produced while, by the end of the coffee period, half of the rice consumed in the country was obtained from outside.[49]

> 'The chief pursuit of Sinhalese is undoubtedly *agriculture*, though it would appear the large importation of grain, equal in value to £460,000 annually, that their skill and industry is upon the most limited scale Making every allowance for the influx of a large immigrant population of Malabars from India, to cultivate the coffee estates which have been planted by Europeans within the last eight years, it is yet well known and proved by the importation previous to the date, that the rice required for their own consumption has been particularly supplied from other countries '[50]

Even in the 1880's, about half of the grain consumption in the island was

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from India and Burma The later was administratively part of India until 1937 See Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p 214, makes reference to *AR 1883*, report for the Central Province, p 10A

[46] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 363

[47] Knighton, William *The History of Ceylon*, p 363

[48] Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p 38

[49] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 66

[50] Lewis, R E 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p 31

obtained from abroad [51] This conditions seem not have changed in the first quarter of the twentieth century 'Ceylon paddy production was sufficient to meet the half of the annual requirements and efforts were doing to increase the production '[52] 'Usual rice crop of Ceylon may be taken at 13-14 million bushels, and as the production of this is insufficient to meet the requirements of the population, for years past Ceylon has drawn her supply from India '[53]

From the emergence of the plantation economy, imports of rice were mainly financed by the earnings from plantation exports It was a fragile situation, since export earnings fluctuated violently with world market conditions, in contrast, the expenditure on food imports remained high because the demand for essentials is inelastic [54] In addition, the imports of rice continued to increase as a result of the dynamic nature of the colonial economy 'With the increase in population due both to high rate of natural increase and the immigration of South Indian labourers to work on coffee and tea plantations, imports of rice were increasing steadily as domestic production failed to keep abreast of demand '[55] 'Imports of rice increased, not only owing to the rise in population but also because per capita consumption was rising throughout the century, so that per capita imports rose from 1 6 bushels in 1827 to 2 5 bushels in 1878 and further to 2 6 bushels in 1898 This increase took place in a period of increasing domestic production '[56] For many years the island had not been producing more than one-third of the rice consumed by the inhabitants, but depended mainly upon India for its supplies [57] The colonial administration took intermittent uncoordinated efforts to develop local rice cultivation from the second half of the 19th century, although the results achieved were not spectacular (**see below: *government support***) The local rice production did not appreciably increase in the period 1869-1900, as a consequence of the rising population, imports of rice and paddy had to increase continually [58] In agriculture, the island became selective and was perhaps

[51] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886 1931 with special reference to tea and rubber* p 67

[52] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', p 100

[53] Whitaker, C F 'Trade and Commerce', p 84

[54] Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p 23

[55] ibid , pp 27-28

[56] ibid , p 22

[57] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Director of the Food Production, CO 57 / 201/ 1920

[58] Wickremeratne, L A 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in the late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p 38 Here the author complains about the lack of

the only purely agricultural country in the world which was not producing even half of its staple food [59]

5.4.2 Consumers of Imported Rice

The demographic settlement contours in the island were redrawn by the colonial economy This was most obvious in the plantation and commercialized districts The population in the central hilly district of Nuwara Eliya, for example, was divided into ' the village, the bazaar and the estate population '[60] This division could be applied to the island as a whole in most of the British period The changes in demographic pattern had gone beyond its physical presence, it brought changes to consumption patterns, especially to rice consumption This was a fundamental departure from the traditional practice of each family producing its own staple food

Capper surmises that, with trifling exceptions, imported rice was being eaten by non-rice cultivators [61] This division of the rice consumption pattern provides an approximate indication of the consumers of imported rice The pattern of imported rice consumption changed over time and space during this period In the plantation district of Nuwara Eliya 'The estate population depends, almost entirely on imported rice, the bazaars on country-grown and imported produce, and the villagers almost entirely on what they grow themselves '[62] TheUva provincial report states 'One third of the community, comprising the estate and bazaars population and coolies employed on public works, get the bulk of their food from outside Their rice comes from India, '[63] The coastal Matara district report says 'Except along the sea coast, where the villagers consist principally of fishermen, this population is almost entirely an agricultural one The greater portion of their food is locally produced, a large proportion of the imported supplies being for the consumption of the town of Matara and the larger fishing villages of Weligama, Mirissa '[64] The commercialized Colombo district

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consistent details of prices in this period

[59] Guha, K D Industrial Problems of Ceylon', *The Ceylon Economic Journal*, vol vii, Dec 1935, p 28, An Address delivered at the Rotary Club, Colombo, on 14th Nov, 1935

[60] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57/99/1886

[61] Capper, John 'The Food Statistics of Ceylon , *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, 5 (17), 1871-72, p 21

[62] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57/99/1886

[63] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO 57/99/1886

[64] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO 57/99/1886

mainly depended on imported rice. 'In the district of Colombo the majority of the inhabitants subsists on imported rice, the yield of country paddy being quite insufficient to meet the requirement of the people.'[65] Again, the Colombo district report much later stated that villagers without paddy fields and the well-to-do classes consumed only imported rice.[66] This was also true in the districts which previously produced sufficient grains, mostly with the support of rainwater. 'It was found that in the North Western Province generally a fourth of their rice consumed had to be imported from India. In the district of Kurunägala in particular, it was estimated that a third of the rice consumed in the divisions of Weudavelli, Dambadeniya and Katugampola was imported, whilst in the Dewamädi division a forth of the rice...'[67]

In 1887 Ferguson could say; the '...rice imported from India for feeding the coolies and others directly or indirectly connected with the great planting enterprise of Ceylon, including a large proportion of the urban population. The Sinhalese and Tamil rice cultivators barely grow enough grain to support themselves and their dependents...'[68] Nevertheless, the estate laborer did not consume the full rice ration he received from the planter; he bartered a part of it with traders for sundry expenses such as clothing and curry ingredients.[69] This share of the rice should be deducted from the estate laborer's account and be added to the other rice consumers - free immigrant Indian laborers, bazaar people and villagers. A considerable portion of this would have been passed by the traders to the villagers living close to the plantations. In the nineteenth century rice cultivating peasants both in the coastal and interior districts were becoming more and more dependent on imported rice, not because of transitory harvest failures, but as a habitual practice.[70] This was further deepened in the 20th century; more and more natives were becoming dependent on imported rice. They were clearly turning from local rice to imported rice.

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[65] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/99/1886.
[66] Administration Reports-vol. I, Western Province, CO: 57/161/1905.
[67] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in the late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p. 36.
[68] Ferguson, John . *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, pp. 133-134.
[69] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 211; makes reference to *The Colombo Observer*, November 12, 1886.
[70] ibid., p. 213; makes reference to *BPP 1847-1848*, Vol. 42, p. 61.

5.4.3 Duty on Imported Rice

The duty on imported rice seems to have fallen entirely upon the consumers, as rice was an essential consumer article.[71] The duty on grain '...falls chiefly on the immigrant population, and excepting the small amount they pay for salt, is the only tax which they pay for the protection they receive. It also falls on the inhabitants in towns who likewise pay no other taxes except those special to towns in which they live.'[72] It was estimated that the '...town dweller and estate coolly pay through this item about 3 to 4 per rupees per head to annum. ... a coolly whether on an estate or elsewhere ... pays through the imported rice he consumes, at least 35 cents a month.'[73] In the early years of the plantations, the import duty on rice seems to have had virtually no impact on its price as compared with the heavy transport cost. Before the development of modern communications; the import duty on rice bore a comparatively small portion of the cost of transport to the interior of the country.[74] The duty on rice was also an important source of revenue for the colonial administration. The revenue received from the rice/paddy duty in the year 1823 was £12, 927. [75] 'The import duties on grain yield about £180,000, which is the equivalent of upwards of one-fifth of the ordinary revenue raised from taxation. It is at the rate of 65.6d a bushel of the port of Colombo.'[76] In 1876 the duty on rice contributed £183,853 to government revenue.[77] At the end of the third decade of the 20th century this duty

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[71] The cost of the estate laborer's rice was born by the plantation owners. This was no more than giving a share of the salary in kind to make sure the labor's minimum consumption kept him physically fit to work long hours in the plantation and to prevent absenteeism.; see Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, pp. 210-213 and Ameer Ali, A. C. M. 'Rice and Irrigation in 19th Century Sri Lanka', pp. 261-262.

[72] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/1877.

[73] Fernando, Marcus H. 'Study of Ceylon's Economic Problem', *The Ceylon Economic Journal*, vol. I, No. I, June 1929, p. 7.

[74] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/ 1877.

[75] Ceylon Government, Sessional Paper No. 29 of 1878, "Papers Relating to Grain", p. 13; quoted in Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 263.

[76] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/1877.

[77] Ceylon Government, Sessional Paper No. 29 of 1878, "Papers Relating to Grain", p. 13; quoted in Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 263.

contributed 9.4 millions[rupees?] in the aggregate was obtained from about half the population. The rest consumed locally produced rice.[78]

One of the objectives of levying a duty on imports is to protect the local production from foreign competition. This was more true in many developed countries in the past than it is today. The importance of this policy was pointed out in the early days of the British rule. 'In Ceylon, where the cultivation of grain is so much below what is wanted for the support of its inhabitants, the owners and cultivators of rice ought to be protected, by an import duty, from occasional very low prices in the rice imported from the Coromandel coast.'[79] If the local paddy production received this protection during the period seems to be a somewhat contentious issue. On locally cultivated grain '...there is also a Government levy, the remains of the old tithe or rent paid to the native kings, but this has been greatly reduced of the late years by the application of commutation, so that the import duty on grain is now decidedly protective of local industry.'[80] However, it appears more likely that the import duty on rice was not protective. It was very small and remained mostly unchanged during the 19th century while, on the contrary, the levy on home grown paddy was increased at each new commutation settlement and it also had to be paid whether the field was cultivated or not and whether the harvest was abundant or not, except where crop commutation was introduced.[81] The proponents of laissez-faire within the colonial administration wanted to keep the import duty at a bare minimum to avoid giving special protection or an unfair advantage to local rice over imported rice.[82]

The import duty on rice was not a protective duty in its operation, being equivalent to only one-tenth of what the native cultivator paid on home-grown grain.[83] The import duty was not a protective one, neither from the producer's side, nor also from the consumer's side and it did not check the consumption of imported rice. The commissioners of the tax on home-grown grain stated '...we are of the opinion that the customs duties on grain do not affect consumption in any material degree.'[84] The internal grain levy

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[78] Fernando, Marcus H. Study of Ceylon's Economic Problem, p. 7.

[79] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p. 121

[80] Ferguson, John . *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p. 134.

[81] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 264.

[82] ibid., p. 216; makes reference to *BPP 1847-1848*, vol. 42, p. 61.

[83] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on Home-Grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/1877.

[84] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the

or paddy rent was abolished altogether from January 1893 without touching the corresponding custom duty [85] This might have been a boost to the local producer if the other necessary conditions for paddy production had been right The quantity of rice imports continued uninterrupted even after the abolition of paddy land tax

5.4.4 Imported Rice Versus Native Rice

The importation of rice seems to have adversely affected the inducements to the local producer to grow rice in excess of his needs 'Cheap rice was imported in such a large quantities from abroad that not only was native rice unwanted, but the cultivation discouraged' [86] Colonial government restored the irrigation works in the Batticaloa district and the people for their part began to produce surplus rice However, the imported rice hampered the progress of colonial rice production efforts 'A great dearth of money has been felt in the Batticaloa District, in consequence of the inability of the people to sell their surplus paddy at the rates which have ruled in former years, owing to an abundant harvest in India having caused a heavy fall in prices at least 100,000 bushels (paddy) remained in hand over and above the requirements of District' [87] Six decades after this report appeared, the Batticaloa farmers had to face the same difficulties The main channel of export for paddy from the Batticaloa District is to Jaffna, and normally little paddy or rice goes anywhere else A few years back Batticaloa rice was sent to supply estates in Uva, but this trade has recently dropped off owing to the lower prices imported Indian rice and probably owing to also to the improved facilities for its transport from Colombo During the present year owing to an excellent harvest in the North of the Island and cheapness imported Burma paddy the bottom has drop out of the usual Jaffna market for Batticaloa paddy and hence the price has not followed its normal seasonal curve' [88] A similar complaint was made in the North Central administration report 'At the time of writing, the Indian rice

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Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on Home Grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain 1877, CO 57/72/ 1877

[85] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903*, p 119

[86] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886 1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, , pp 321 322, makes reference to the Kandyan Peasantry Commission Report, p 77

[87] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, Batticaloa, CO 57/51/1870

[88] Sessional paper IV-1931, Report of the Paddy Marketing Committee, Batticaloa District, CO 57/ 233/ 1931

is being again imported into the town, while local paddy lies idle and unpounded...'[89] The island's rice price was not ruled by the local market forces, but those of India. 'The value of paddy grown in Ceylon will always be more or less governed by the prices ruling in India, but there appears to be general tendency to a reduction, certainly in this province.'[90]

Only when the foreign rice supply did not arrive uninterruptedly for some reason or another, did both the colonial administration and the plantations turn to local production. The cost of imported rice rose as a consequence of war conditions and the control of Indian export necessitated by the partial failure of the 1918 monsoon in India,[91] so that attention turned to local rice. 'The Agriculture Department should also inquire into the economic requirements of the industry, and whether steps cannot be recommended for supplying certain necessities locally instead of relying upon importation. The food supply of the labourers employed is largely imported, and it is not improbable that certain quantities of those could be produced locally if arrangements for marketing were organised.'[92] Again, when the price of imported rice went up, the plantations turned to local products to minimize the cost. 'With a view to reduce the "loss on rice," estates most carefully controlled the amount of rice issued to the labour force, and utilised a considerable quantity of locally grown and imported kurakkan, greengram, beans, maze...'[93] Those injections to local production were seasonal and temporary. Under normal circumstances rice kept flowing from India, freely hampering the local production. Gunawardene maintains that one of the major reasons for the decline in interest in the expansion of rice production in the early years of the twentieth century was the intense competition from cheap imported rice.[94]

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[89] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO: 57/199 /1918.

[90] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/105/1888.

[91] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Director of Food Production, CO: 57/ 201/ 1920

[92] Stockdale, F. A., Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co-ordination and extension of Agricultural services', CO: 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

[93] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Agriculture, CO: 57/201/ 1920; Kurakkan was considered to be an unwholesome food by most of Colonial administrators and European commentators during the period. The same food was procured to feed the plantation laborers when necessity warranted.

[94] Gunawardene, Elaine. *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p. 28.

4.5 Quality Issue

Large quantities of imported rice were sold and consumed, especially with the expansion of the plantation agriculture. Whether the quality of imported rice was higher than the local varieties is naturally one of the important questions that arises here. Conflicting opinions are given by the contemporary writings on this issue. 'The import of rice does not depend entirely on the quantity of rice for which there is a demand, but also on the quality. There is in some district a market preference for Indian rice, this fact is however, note worthy in connection with irrigation and large irrigation works which have been restored in the last few years.'[95] On some occasions, complains were made about the poor quality of the local rice. '..it is, surprising, however, that no little effort is made to increase the yield and to improve the quality, the more so as paddy cultivation is a protected industry.'[96] This opinion was not accepted by all; some defended the quality of local varieties. 'The price of village rice in the interior averages Rs. 3.00 per bushel, and although not so attractive in appearance, it is I believe, even more nourishing, and to many palettes more agreeable, than the imported grain.'[97] At times, it was maintained that the hand-pounded local rice was '...of excellent quality, comparing most favourably with the insipid article imported from India, the taste and nutritive qualities of which have been effectively destroyed by the rice mills.'[98] As might be expected, the poor natives preferred the locally grown rice. 'Poor class people prefer locally made rice to Indian.'[99] A part of the estate laborer's wage was given in imported rice. However, he '...had never had reason to develop a taste for local rice as their supplies had always been obtained by planters from India.'[100] Even if we conclude that the Ceylonese rice was inferior, it was not an insurmountable challenge. Favorable changes could have been generated over time. Ceylonese tea cultivation also had the similar unfavorable conditions in its infancy. 'I can remember the earlier reports on the first shipments of tea sent home from Ceylon. "burnt" "wanting in flavour", "wanting in keeping qualities", and so on. What would have become of Ceylon if the planters had then said "tea is a failure it is no use to plant tea in Ceylon'.[101]

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[95] Administration Reports-vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO: 57/157/1904.
[96] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907
[97] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO: 57/93/1884.
[98] Administration Report, Eastern Province, CO: 57/201/1920.
[99] Administration Reports-vol. 1, Northern Province, CO: 57/157/1904.
[100] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 216.
[101] Administration Reports-vol. I, Southern Province, CO: 57/161/1905.

5.5 Natives' Response to Price Signals: *not bad*

There were a number of insurmountable obstacles in the private sphere of the producer, such as lack of irrigation facilities, cultivable land and communications, against the expansion of local grain production. However, if the producer did respond to the price signals at least to certain extent in the initial stages, this was a good indication that the local production could have been increased. The number of provincial reports refer to the native producer's responses to price signals. 'The high price of rice and chena produce proved a strong incentive to the increased cultivation of paddy, and not only was every available paddy field cultivated but there was also an extraordinary increase in the extent of chenas brought under cultivation. Many applications were received for the asweddumization of new lands.'[102] 'The scarcity of foodstuffs caused a large demand for land for paddy growing and advantage was freely taken of the favourable terms offered by Government for such land ... high prices, however, checked consumption on the one hand, and the deficiency on the other hand, was lessened by excellent local crops of paddy and very largely increased cultivation of dry grains and the foodstuffs, especially manioc.'[103] 'This demand for food other than rice at prices about three times their prewar figure greatly stimulated the local production of foodstuffs...'[104] 'If they could first be engaged to cultivate their lands, and to taste the comforts arising from industry and prosperity, their own inclinations would speedily lead them to manufactures and commerce.'[105] There was little native initiative during the period.

The large investors had little or no interest in paddy cultivation. 'Paddy growing never attracted the capitalist... The cultivation thus received no spur to increased effort, no scope for enterprise, no reward for any labour in excess of that determined by the needs of himself and his family. These conditions have led the economic stagnation of the peasant farmer.'[106] Even when the large-scale producers came into the paddy sector; they did so half heartedly.

> 'The paddy sown on the land of the native company at Kantalai was growing luxuriantly at the end of the year, but no proper care is being taken of it. The dams

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[102] Administration Report, Uva Province, CO 57/201/1920.
[103] Administration Report, Northern Province, CO: 57/201/1920
[104] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Agriculture, CO: 57/201/1920.
[105] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 364
[106] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 322

> are incomplete, water was running to waste, there is no fence nor sufficient watch, and the large field is being left to the care of Kangani and 25 or 35 coolies. The company has no representative now in this districts; and unless greater efforts are made the crop will scarcely be gathered in safely, and the loss which will ensure from neglect will be for grater than the expense of proper management would have been. Mr. Ford, who for a long time worked so hard for the company, has gone away to Jaffna. The paddy reaped in 1880 is kept in a shed, and greater part of it seems to be chaff. I am not aware that any attempt has been made to sell it.'[107]

Large-scale private investments into the paddy sector were hard to come by, since there were many other opportunities in the island giving higher returns for capital looking for investments. Plantations were the magnet of the day. Stockdale corroborates the investment environment of the time '...the profits for paddy cultivation are less than for other crops and are insufficient to attract capital and organization.'[108] The colonial policies also partly contributed to spoiling the appetite for larger scale investments in the paddy sector. 'Owing to the low return from rice cultivation and the paddy tax, both domestic and foreign investors had limited interested in rice expansion. The Ceylonese were not interested in large-scale production of rice which was mainly restricted to small producers. They too were interested little in expanding rice cultivation owing to the difficulties of marketing.'[109]

Even small native paddy producer did not always respond to the price signals positively because of problems he could not overcome. The Colombo district report, for example, gave the following account. 'One would have expected that the high price of imported rice would have impelled paddy field owners to supply their own wants, if not to compete in the market with imported rice yet no such effort has so far been apparent... There is very little scope in Colombo district to expand the paddy cultivation.'[110] The land for large-scale paddy cultivation was available only in the drier parts of the island, where it was warranted only by the artificial irrigation facilities. Not only did the prevalent long-term low prices keep the large-scale investors away from paddy culture, but plantation agriculture and the allied service sector offered them sufficient investment opportunities, so that it was only the small producers who responded to the short-term price movements.

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[107] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/82/1880.
[108] Stockdale F. A. 'Ceylon Agriculture', p. 100.
[109] Gunawardene, Elaine. *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, pp. 27-28
[110] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907.

5.6 Rice Production was not Efficient: *a matter of time*

It was maintained that the local rice production was supplemented by the imported rice, since the natives were not producing rice sufficiently and efficiently. The production was inefficient since '... the soil is so exceedingly barren as only to yield a precarious crop under the greatest care and pains bestowed on its cultivation...the cultivation is carried on in an unskillful and slothful manner. Without doubt all these causes exist, more or less, and operate to restrict the agriculture of this people, varying degree in different parts of the country.'[111] The agriculture was carried out by centuries-old traditions and primitive implements, the cultivation technique was backward, the illiterate peasant on his own could not bring about any agricultural improvements.[112] In addition, the minute subdivision of cultivable paddy lands made insufficient earnings for the paddy-growing family and this was another problem in Ceylon.[113]

The North Central report stated, 'The conservatism of the villager is notorious. New methods do not appeal to him. Transplanting is hardly known.'[114] The central Nuwara Eliya AGA reported a similar story. The chief obstacles to agricultural progress were the '...apathy and conservatism of the Kandyan villager. No amount of the pamphlets or lecturing will induce him to forsake the methods of his forefathers and transplant his paddy or manure fields; practical demonstration of the result of intensive methods of cultivation is the only thing that appeals to him.'[115] There is no reason to be surprised that '... their agriculture should be carried on in the same rude and primitive manner as it was in the past ages...Their few wants being so easily supplied, there has been an absence of every inducement to increased and improved tillage; whilst their superstitious observances respecting time and seasons, handed down to them from a remote period, have had their effect in tying them down to the customs of their forefathers.'[116]

The implements used for the cultivation were so primitive and demanded much time and labor; so that the cost of production was naturally high. '...buffalo ploughs, implements of the most primitive construction,

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[111] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 32.
[112] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp. 331-332.
[113] Fernando, Sir H, Marcus. 'Paddy Cultivation in Ceylon: An Economic Study', *The Tropical Agriculturist*, vol 75, Nov. 1930, pp. 272, 276.
[114] Administration Report, North-Central Province, 1919, CO. 57/200.
[115] Administration Report, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/201/1920.
[116] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 32.

consisting of a short sharp point of wood pressed against the soil, are used for breaking up the lumps of earth which remain. There can be no doubt, however, that the tramping of the huge animals which are tethered to the plough effects far more than the instrument itself in reducing the surface of the field to the consistency of mud. Besides the plough, in the low-country a squire board, on which the driver consistently jumps, is dragged by buffaloes over the fields for this purpose...'[117] This was again asserted by the maritime Matara district report after two decades. 'Farming implements in ordinary use in Ceylon are at the present time very much what they have been for at least a centuries, if not more, and threshing and winnowing and other agricultural operations are still conducted in the most primitive oriental fashion. Threshing or more literally, the treading out of the rice crop, is a most laborious, tedious, and consequently expensive process; for example, in the Matara District, one-seventh of the entire crop is the share paid to those who reap and thresh, winnowing being done by women and paid for separately'.[118] 'To improve the fertility of their fields by manuring, the natives of Ceylon have but small ideas. Amongst the hills, cattle are pastured upon the stubble, and the straw after threshing is burnt upon the field; but pasturage of cattle, though good for the land, is only done for the purpose of feeding them, and the burning of straw is only done to get rid of what is left after re-thatching their buildings.'[119] This was true even in the early 20th century in some parts of the country. For example, in the North Central province manure was not in use.[120]

The low productivity in the rice sector in the island appears to have been the cumulative result of all the inherited backward characteristics. 'In paddy cultivation, the return is rarely over fifteen fold; seldom so much: the cultivation is expensive and laborious.'[121] This was the same in some parts of the island even after decades. 'The average yield in this district is 10 to 15 fold.'[122] However, in some districts productivity was comparatively higher than in others. In Mannar district yield was 25 fold when cultivated in the ordinary native way and in Matara it was 30 fold before irrigation was introduced.[123] It was maintained that the productivity in Ceylon was

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[117] ibid , p 36

[118] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO· 57/51/1870; this was quoted by the writer from a letter he had written to the Colonial Secretary.

[119] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 37.

[120] Administration Report, North-Central Province, 1919, CO 57/200

[121] Administration Reports, A letter by the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland (26th Sept 1882), CO: 57/87/1882.

[122] Administration Report, North-Central Province, 1919, CO. 57/200.

[123] Elliott, E. 'Rice Cultivation under Irrigation in Ceylon', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch*

lower than in India. 'The average return of rice per acre in Ceylon, under the most favourable circumstances, is considerably below the Indian average.'[124] Fernando maintained that Ceylon had the lowest paddy yield in the world.[125]

Ceylon was said to be importing rice from the efficient Indian producers. The Indian system of paddy cultivation was decidedly superior in many respects to that followed in this Island, although there was still room for improvement in this respect and paddy could be locally grown with the aid of irrigation more economically than it could be imported.[126] Yet there seem to have been plus points within the native paddy culture itself to offset the low productivity. 'There is no hiring of coolies or money payment for any additional requirements. The work is done on the co-operative or bee system, neighbours assisting each other with out any especial remuneration beyond a good meal provided by the individual whose land is being tilled.'[127] In 1917-1918 yield from the paddy cultivated area was about sufficient for half of the population supplemented by other food grains.[128]

One argument seem to have been deployed in defense of the built-in inefficiency of the native paddy cultivation. 'What is required for the encouragement of agriculture in Ceylon is not science but common sense. It is important to recognise that rice is grown according to a system, based upon calculation and ordered method. It is wrong to regard it is an unscientific or worthless. The peasant that learned and tested this system and found that it can be worked though it yields little profit owing to various unfavourable conditions...'[129] A compromise to arguments running on these lines had been made in the 19th century. '... on the one hand, the cultivator knows much more about his field and their requirements than

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of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. IX, No. 31, 1885. p. 168.

[124] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883*, p. 39 and Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p. 44

[125] Fernando, Sir H, Marcus. 'Paddy Cultivation in Ceylon: An Economic Study', p. 271.

Average Paddy yield per acre - 1917

Country:	Spain	Japan	Egypt	Italy	British Guiana	Java	India	Ceylon
Bushels	101	77	73	63	54	40	40	15-20

Source: ibid. p. 271; makes reference to the *Bulletin of the Imperial Institute*, (April 1917).

[126] Elliott, E. Rice Cultivation under Irrigation in Ceylon, pp. 163, 170.

[127] Ibid., p. 163; Elliot's opinions are challenged by Ferguson, who said that they were confined to a few districts and not apply to the whole island. See: Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p. 44

[128] Fernando, Sir H, Marcus. 'Paddy Cultivation in Ceylon: An Economic Study', p. 271.

[129] Wijesinhe, J. E. Encouragement of Food Production, p. 53.

anyone else, and it is a mistake to interfere with him, yet, on the other modern science could teach him a great deal about the chemical composition of soils, the rotation of crops & c , which would naturally be useful to him as it has been to the English farmer '[130]

New and efficient methods were not being generated within the native paddy culture itself, so that the changes needed to be introduced by external agents The most potent channel was the colonial administration and it did take some initiatives in this direction although it did not complete the task 'We have not had an encouraging example in the case of the Alfred model farm, but it must be remembered that German experience is on the whole against the method of teaching practical agriculture on model farms, it is, rather in favour of giving the elements of agricultural knowledge in ordinary schools, and following it up with field lessons on ordinary farms chosen for the purpose '[131] The colonial administration officially accepted that the botanical experiments carried out for the development of local paddy cultivation were insufficient ' beyond some work begun in 1910 at Peradeniya in selecting strains from some local kinds of paddy, and some field selection carried on by the instructors of the Agricultural Society, little else has been done with this crop, except the introduction of exotic kinds of seed paddy '[132]

All in all, the local rice culture was not always inefficient, there were some signs of changes in right direction in many parts of the island 'The cultivation of paddy as practiced in the Kandyan district is more scientific than in many other districts, in that transplanting is practiced and manure used to some extent '[133] Improved methods were followed and better results were obtained under the Anuradhapura city tanks [134] 'In not a few instances is good mutusamba rice being grown instead of the ordinary country paddy, while bone-dust manure is coming considerably into use, even amongst some of the common villagers, who have seen its good effect when used by their richer neighbours '[135] 'The cultivation of paddy is still mostly practiced in Ceylon on traditional lines, and the adoption of new methods by the people is a slow process But the transplantation and the use of manure are becoming more popular than I had anticipated, and have made very great

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[130] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/101/1887
[131] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO 57/86/1882
[132] Stockdale, F A , Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co ordination and extension of Agricultural services , CO 57 198/1918/1919/1920
[133] Administration Reports, Central Province , CO 57 /199 /1918
[134] Administration Report, North-Central Province, 1919, CO 57/200
[135] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO 57/86/1882

strides indeed...'[136] New methods of paddy cultivation using manure and transplanting were becoming successful.[137] 'An increasing number of cultivators are now transplanting weeding and making use of artificial and cattle manure. This is the direct result of demonstration plots and manuring experiments. ...'[138] It seems that the natives were getting used to more efficient methods of cultivation, although the process was slow.

Some initiatives were also taken in the mechanical sphere by the colonial administration, although they did not always produce the desired results. 'We have also had out a plough, said to be the lightest made in England, but find it too heavy for use, knocking up even buffaloes, and unfitting them for a second day's work. I am now on the look-out for a very light American plough I have heard of. The winnowing machines answer perfectly, and only want to be made somewhat smaller, to be more portable, the size sent me requiring four men to carry.'[139] 'The new plough supplied to me for experimental purposes has not been successful in stimulating the people to adopt modern improvements.'[140] The most successful step taken in the mechanical sphere during the period was paddy pounding, which had a far-reaching effect on the paddy culture of the island. 'A paddy hulling machine was installed as an experiment at Anuradhapura jail in September, 1920 ...'[141] 'Small mills have been erected in recent years... with the objective of demonstrating the possibilities for such milling. The results obtained have been satisfactory and indicate that rice milling in Ceylon can extend and be commercially successful.'[142] This change was not equally welcome, even by some British local administrators. ' The pounding provides a livelihood for number of poor women. I am glad to say we have no rice mill in Batticaloa at present, and I hope it will be a long time before one is introduced.'[143] 'Opinion generally in Batticaloa is opposed to a paddy mill. The reason for this is that pounding paddy forms the means of livelihood of number of women of the

[136] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO 57/204/1921
[137] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO 57/204/1921
[138] Administration Report, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57/201/1920
[139] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO 57/51/1870, The writer had brought two threshing machines from England, the Matara irrigation committee funded them for the district, and they also had two American seed-dressing or winnowing machines and an American hand rice-peeler or husker, which was on its way from Calcutta when the report was being written
[140] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/99/1886
[141] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Director of the Food Production, CO 57/201/1920
[142] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', pp 99-100
[143] Administration Report, Eastern Province, CO 57/201/1920

poorer classes.'[144] This was not a strong dislike among the most of natives, so paddy milling expanded many parts of the island. The introduction of paddy hulling machines appears to have reduced the technological gap in the processing of crops between the traditional rice culture and the modern plantation sector to some extent. 'In rice milling, a production phase comparable to the processing of plantation crops, there has been a substitution of capital for labour.'[145]

5.7 Government Support: *too little, too late*

We examine here in brief to what extent the colonial government's agricultural policies affected local food production in general and rice production in particular. The colonial policies were neither purely black nor white, but what the comments made them.

Criticisms made against colonial rule vary from the simple overlooking of traditional agriculture to the hostile policies against it. The neglect of peasant agriculture by the British is a factor that aroused criticism from nationalist leaders for many years.[146] Traditionally, the peasant agriculture of the island had long depended on state encouragement and support; neither of these were forthcoming until the second half of the 19th century.[147] The criticism claims that the land policies adopted during this period were mostly detrimental to native agriculture. The waste land ordinance is considered a classic example in this regard; and a consequence of this ordinance was that some '... whole villages have been totally abandoned and they are now left to prowling wild beasts; The once free villagers have in many cases been harnessed as labourers possibly for generations, though they were families who lived in quiet contentment...'[148] The grain tax also had an adverse impact on the peasant sector until it was finally abolished in 1892.[149] For many years dilapidated irrigation works were not repaired by the colonial government, the agriculture in the dry zone '...depended on tank-fed irrigation, but over the centuries many of the tanks had been destroyed or were in a state of

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[144] Sessional paper IV - 1931, Report of the Paddy Marketing Committee, Batticaloa District, CO: 57/233/1931.
[145] de Silva, S. B. D. *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 303.
[146] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p. 13.
[147] ibid., p. 167.
[148] Wijesinhe, J. E. 'Food Production in the Southern Province', p. 203.
[149] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, pp. 168-169.

disrepair...'[150] 'There can be no doubt as to the large quantity of rice which could be grown around the network of tanks in the North and East, which have been lying for centuries broken and unused in the midst of unoccupied territories.'[151] Another disastrous condition was brought about by the abolition of *Rajakariya* in 1833, which created the individual agriculturist responsible only to himself. This eventually deprived the entire community of labor to maintain the tank bunds and irrigation channels in good condition, whereas earlier the village elders had the authority to enforce the *Rajakariya* obligation.[152] What the colonial government provided the peasant with were not really their priorities. Many villagers in various parts of the Kandyan provinces '... are labouring under a sense of grievances, not for the government's failure to put up a school or a post office or to build a road or a hospital, but for its neglect to supply the basic needs of irrigation by building a tank, a channel or pathaha.'[153]

Official bodies formed under the name of agriculture seem not to have given badly needed support to native agriculture '... the Department of Agriculture has hitherto grossly neglected its duty. There has been much occasional talk and nothing else, and the chief industry of the country has been suffered to languish and decay receiving neither sympathetic advice nor the practical aid of the Agricultural Department.'[154] The official response to the popular criticism against the colonial agricultural policies was that 'The Government can only encourage, it cannot grows foodstuffs. It depends on the people to grow them.'[155] However those opinions were not left unheeded.

> 'Does it seriously mean anything when it speaks of encouragement? It entirely depends on the people to grow foodstuffs, and the rural people are very willing to do this. But what facilities are afforded them for obtaining either land or water? In many places the village lands are fully planted up, and though thousands of acres of Crown land (not reserved as forests) are available, these

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[150] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development.* Thesis submitted for Ph.D., The London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 1968, p. 224.

[151] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883*, p. 38.

[152] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 52.

[153] Kandyan Peasantry Commission, p. 76; quoted in Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 330

[154] Wijesinhe, J. E. 'Encouragement of Food Production', p. 58.

[155] Stockdale, the director of agriculture, in a agricultural show at Weligama (no date is mentioned); quoted in Wijesinhe, J. E. 'Encouragement of Food Production', pp. 58-59.

> are practically closed to the small farmer If the Government wishes to encourage food production why does it without land from the peasant who will grow food-stuffs and give it on liberal terms to the capitalists adventures who are only out for dividends? The peasants are often in distress, sometimes on account of floods, and what is done to compensate for the loss of he suffers? how can his words be reconciled with the actions of the Government? Why are chena lands be illegalised? Why are not peasant farmers encouraged to buy lands? Why is the water rate of one and in some cases two rupees per acre which is heavy enough being gradually suspended by and exorbitant rate of Rs. 4/-? Why is made more and more difficult for the villager to keep cattle when it is necessary to have them for working his fields? Why is not sympathetic effort made to restore the village pasture land and raise the peasant above indigence? And what excuse can be afford for the absence of a Branch in the Department of Agriculture, especially for promoting rice cultivation by practical and reasonable mean?'[156]

Most of these allegations may have been correct, but the sole objective of the colonial administration was not to make the natives happy and prosperous at the expense of its own benefits. However, it appears that the Dutch did manage to keep some sort of tolerable balance between the native agriculture and the colonial objectives.

> 'We have not done our duty in the matter by the population committed to our charge We have not understood their character or their wants The works upon which the success or failure of Eastern agriculture depends cannot be undertaken without Government assistance Their maintenance require constant watchfulness and some annual outlay for which our predecessors, the Dutch, provided amply and were amply repaid by the increased productiveness of districts, which have relapsed into sterility under our rule We must do the same, if we wish to redeem the injury inflicted by past indifferences It is only by extending to native interests the same attention and encouragement that we pay to our countrymen, that we shall ever realise the benefits that ought to be derived from British rule.'[157]

Some sort of reconciliation between the peasant and colonial interests could be witnessed from the second half of the 19th century onwards. 'From 1855 increasing attention had been paid by the government to restoration of the irrigation tanks constructed by the Sinhalese kings.'[158] 'From the beginning of the British rule the government recognised that it was essential to restore the irrigation works. Nothing was done until 1856

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[156] Wijesinhe, J E 'Encouragement of Food Production', pp 58-59

[157] ibid , p 60

[158] Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, pp. 118-119

because perennial deficit made it impossible. ... The abolition of forced labour by the British made the restoration of irrigation works still more out of the question, since it was by this means that they had originally been built and kept in repair.' [159] The 'irrigation ordinance of 1857 led to the beginning of an attempt to rehabilitate tank-fed irrigation, while another ordinance made legal the use of village labour to protect and maintain the irrigation system.'[160] 'The earliest attempts to restore irrigation works was undertaken in the Batticaloa district in the Eastern Province. Here various schemes were completed in the 1870s and in 1905. The effect on paddy production was far-reaching.'[161] At the turn of the 20th century the Batticaloa district was able to produce surplus grain for sale outside.[162] It was the 'most prosperous agricultural district in the malarial dry zone and the proportion of its population depending on irrigation paddy holdings was the highest for the whole dry zone.'[163] Whatever policies were adopted by the colonial administration to improve the native agriculture, more than a century after the occupation the '... only provinces and districts in Ceylon not dependent in some appreciable degree on imported rice are the North-Central Province, the Eastern Province, the Hambantota District of the Southern Province, and the Mannar and Mullaitive Districts of the Northern Province.'[164]

More concerted policy recommendations were made from the second decade of the twentieth century, although these were not essentially put into practice. The immediate cause for new policy recommendations was war conditions, the high price of rice and the inability to import rice from India. 'To encourage the food production of the colony a number of initiatives have been taken including providing seeds at subsidised prices, substitution of locally made produce for imported ones, agricultural shows and garden competition, most of those due to the supply problems during the war periods.'[165] 'The Department of Food Production was established on April 12, 1920, in accordance with the recommendation of the committee

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[159] Mills, Lennox A. *Britain and Ceylon*, p. 55.

[160] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 53.

[161] ibid. p. 53

[162] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 325.

[163] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 72.

[164] Report on food control in 1919. CO: 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

[165] Administration Reports, Report of the Director of Agriculture for the year 1918, CO: 57/199/1918

appointed by the His Excellency the Governor on February 5, 1920, to consider what measures should be adopted to make Ceylon self-supporting in regard its food supply.'[166] 'In view of the agrarian policy now adopted by Government, the committee would suggest that the programme of new irrigation works, which has been suspended for about ten years, should now be resumed, and that the Irrigation Department should not in future be regarded so much as a revenue-earning department, but as a spending department, like the public works, and that its operations should not be considered merely from the point of view of commercial profit.'[167] 'Every effort has been made in recent years to increase the acreage under paddy. Special facilities have been granted to growers and irrigation works have been accelerated. Demonstration and competition have been carried out with the object of encouraging better and more intensive methods of cultivation and its resulting increasing crops.'[168]

The Kandyan provinces were the last native kingdom to fall under British rule after securing their independence for centuries. The agriculture in these provinces '...already had deteriorated when the British arrived in the Island due to shortage of land, frequent wars with the Portuguese and the Dutch, the monarch had no time to pay attention to these matters, people were frequently called for military duties...'[169] Even in the maritime provinces, neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch had paid sufficient attention to the cultivation of grain.[170] From the second half of the 19th century some attention was paid by the British to the native agriculture. However, the degree of support depended on the performance of the plantations and the attitudes of the colonial governors. These two had not always combined in favor of the domestic agriculture. In addition, the efforts to restore old irrigation systems '... were always under the criticism of planters and vested interests for the plantations.'[171] The insufficient interest generated by the colonial administration was quite in accordance with its objectives and practicalities. 'All indigenous states had derived a major part of their revenue from land. Western colonial powers on the other hand financed their rule largely from profits derived from control of trade and commerce... An inevitable consequence of this policy was the

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[166] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Director of the Food Production, CO 57/201/1920

[167] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Irrigation, CO 57/201/1920.

[168] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture, In Plate Compiled', p 100

[169] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* p 329

[170] ibid , p 329

[171] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* pp 168-169

concentration of state attention on commercial rather than subsistence agriculture.'[172] It seems much damage was done when the colonial administration begin to take initiatives for the betterment of native agriculture. The peasant agriculture deteriorated completely when the small amount of attention was paid to it by the colonial government, and the piecemeal measures provided only a little relief to this peasant sector.[173] 'In essence peasant agriculture failed to achieve the dynamic growth achieved by the plantation sector in the nineteenth century and this was, at least in part, due to the lack of interest and sympathy displayed by most of the British officials.'[174]

The acreage under grain cultivation in 1870 was about the same as at the beginning of the British period; so that peasant agriculture remained stagnant throughout the coffee period.[175] British administration began to pay some attention to rice production, although not continuously, from the second half of the 19th century. In the 1870's the grain acreage was approximately a fifth of the total cultivated area of the island, any considerable increase did not occur until the 1920's[176]

TABLE No I

AREA UNDER PADDY CULTIVATION (acres)

1870	650,000
1909	687,000
1914	685,000
1919	711,000
1921	810,000
1931	850,000

Source Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* Thesis submitted for the degree of MSc, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1961, p 324, makes reference to Ceylon Blue Book Series

[172] ibid , p. 11

[173] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* p 330

[174] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* p 170

[175] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* , p 67, makes reference to Ferguson Ceylon Directory, 1870 p 303

[176] ibid , p 324

5.8 Invasion by Plantation: *subsistence vs. cash*

One of the important factors which contributed for the diversion of consumption from local to imported foodstuffs was the expansion of the plantation into the traditional agriculture. As a result of the plantation revolution, a part of the traditional food growing lands and meadows were absorbed into the large-scale plantations. Small food producers or the peasants themselves ventured into small plantation holdings at the expense of their traditional food cultivating lands. Some peasants began to work as part-time or full-time laborers on the plantation, thereby reducing the time and energy available for food production (**see appendix VII: *The Natives' Link with the Plantation***). In addition to these direct contributory factors; indirect factors also operated against traditional food production as a result of the plantation. Ecological change was one of them (**see appendix VI: *Environmental Impact***). At the official level, the plantation was given undue preference mostly at the expense of traditional agriculture. All these factors individually and collectively contributed to keep local food production at bay.

The influence of plantation agriculture extended beyond the regions where it was physically present and also beyond the narrow economic boundaries, but its effects were felt differently in the various ecological regions of the island.[177] It was pointed out that traditional agriculture failed to keep pace with the plantations. 'Although peasant agriculture did not improve significantly, there were factors which helped its survival not so much in the plantation districts but in other areas. From the mid-19th century, incentives were provided in the dry zones to sustain activity by the provision of irrigation facilities and alienation of land to the peasant. In the estate sector, however, many of the tea and rubber plantations encroached into the surrounding village areas, taking away a good part of the land that could have been used for village expansion.' [178]

There were occasions on which the traditional rice producer was converting his lands into plantation crops. 'In the Pitigal Korale South, more rapidly than any other part that I know, the cultivation of cereals is giving way before that of the coconut. Several lands, which were formerly paddy fields, are now being converted into coconut gardens; trenches being dug to drain off the excessive moisture, and the earth banked up between the trenches for the planting of coconuts...'[179] This would have been the

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[177] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 13.
[178] Karunatilake, H. N. S. *Economic Development in Ceylon*, p. 16.
[179] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/93/1884.

case in coconut-growing districts as well In some districts traditional food growing lands were being converted to rubber cultivation 'There is no doubt that in normal times the tendency in this district is for the cultivation of rubber to supplement the production of food crops The worst of it is that just those flat alluvial lands, owitas, and the higher paddy fields, which are especially suitable for growing vegetables and various food crops, are also those upon which the villagers can most profitably grow rubber The extent of such land which has gone into rubber since 1910 runs into some thousand acres, including a not inconsiderable extent of paddy fields which have been allowed to silt up for the purpose '[180] The story was the same in other, wetter districts where grain could be produced without the artificial irrigation facilities ' the district grows tea, rubber, coconut, citronella, &c , as being more remunerative than food products proper this district depend largely for its food supply on India, and the Hambantota district '[181] 'The Kelani Valley had, until the late 1890's, produced such a surplus, but this declined as more land taken over for tea and rubber cultivation In this district a large number of peasants, too, gave up paddy cultivation to adopt tea, rubber or cocoa in small holdings '[182] In the personal sphere the conversion of food producing lands into plantations would have been an added advantage 'The maintenance of coconut was simple and relatively cheap, most of the cultivation being undertaken in small holdings, often at the expense of paddy '[183] 'The planting of rubber gives a larger return at much less personal effort, and it is only natural that the villager should prefer, if he can, to grow rich in idleness, rather than to earn a moderate livelihood by the sweet of his brow ' [184] The plantation revolution brought changes to the old social fabric and high wages for the laborer ' with the decay of the old customs of co-operation and the increase of wages paddy cultivation no longer is a paying concern when hired labour has to be employed Paddy land is being put to other uses '[185]

The story of the impact of commercial agriculture on native food production and livestock is older than the first major plantation, coffee For example, to safeguard cinnamon exports and exploit all the potential economic value the British administration implemented many regulations

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[180] Administration Reports, Kalutara District -Western Province, CO 57/199/1918
[181] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/199/1918
[182] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber* p 325
[183] Kamil Asad, M N M *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under British Rule*, Navrang, New Delhi, 1993, p 119
[184] Administration Reports, Kalutara District -Western Province, CO 57/199/1918
[185] Administration Report, Central Province, CO 57/232/1931

to protect cinnamon plants. 'A complex set of regulations, largely borrowed from the Dutch, enforced the monopoly. Every cinnamon tree, wherever it grew, was protected by law and harsh punishment was meted out to those who harmed or injured them in any manner...The law which protected the cinnamon plant tended to lower the value of land overrun with cinnamon - checked their improvement, and harmed economic activities of the villagers such as rearing of livestock and chena cultivation.'[186]

Many more changes were introduced to reduce the lands available for food production with the expansion of the major plantations. 'It is manifest that a village restricted rigorously to its paddy lands alone could not continue to exist... Yet in practically the whole of the coffee and tea planting areas of the Central and Uva Provinces, a century of British administration has left behind hundreds of plantation-locked villages rigorously restricted to their paddy lands.'[187] The sale of crown lands for plantations also affected grain cultivation adversely and the sale of forest, waste and uncultivated land limited the scope of land for peasant agriculture.[188] 'The stagnation of the native farming and the rise of the plantations were concurrent, which makes it difficult to disentangle causes and effects. It also lends support to the contention that the poverty of the peasant farmers in Ceylon was due to external pressure, particularly ruthless competition for land from capitalist planters, and the failure on the part of the administration to give local farmers opportunities to compete with the plantations on equal terms.'[189]

Changes brought about by the plantation agriculture led the island to depend greatly on imported rice 'A very striking development in the coffee sector during the expansion of coffee industry was the progress of dependence on foreign imports of rice, the basic food of the Sinhalese population.'[190] With '... the focus of the Kandyan village socio-economic organisation shifts away from paddy cultivation, the village has become increasingly dependent on outside employment and other external sources for its very survival. In other words, the paddy centered traditional village

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[186] Samaraweera, Vijaya. Economic and Social Development under the British, *University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon*, Volume Three, The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p. 57.

[187] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p. 71.

[188] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 66; makes reference to CO: 54: 643. Stanmore to Colonial Office 12 June 1897.

[189] ibid., p. 325.

[190] ibid., p. 66.

is in a process of disintegration.'[191] The growth of small peasant plantations '...among the more prosperous villagers made possible a general increase in the level of living of the villagers. Thus, at the household level the effect of these changes was to provide the cash to purchase more food and amenities during a normal year and an adequate supply of imported food during a crisis.'[192] The expansion of the estate sector led some natives to abandon their traditional food cultivation habits fully or partially and to become the laborers of the plantations. 'Fortunately, however, in the Kuruviti and Nawdun Korales, where the effects would likely be felt most, the majority of the population do not look to paddy and chena cultivation as a sole means of livelihood. In these Korales there is a growing tendency to abandon paddy cultivation to work on estates. Work on the estate is ultimately not so remunerative to the villager as paddy and chena cultivation, which usually supply him with all his requirements, but regular payment of wages has the advantages of providing the villager with the ready means of purchasing articles of food and giving him more opportunities of leading a leisure life. Therefore, so long as the estates continue to prosper, there is no likelihood of the occurrence of any distress.'[193] Only when the plantation sector was in trouble, did the natives turn back to their usual food cultivation. 'The depression and lack of employment on estates drove the people to devote more time and labour to agriculture pursuits. A large extent of low land previously left uncultivated was planted with vegetables, yams, plantains, and other products which give a quick return.'[194] It was the same in the mining sector, although it was not important in the colonial economy. 'During the twelve months there was a greater activity in the production of both rice and vegetables than during several previous years. This was owing to the scant demand for labour at the plumbago pits, and the facilities which the clearing of some neglected water courses afforded in the cultivation of particularly the later article.'[195]

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[191] Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 10, makes reference Morrison, Barrie 'Meegama Seeking Livelihood in a Kandyan village' and Silva, Tuder 'Welivita The Demise of Kandyan Feudalism' In Barrie Morrison et al (eds) *The Disintegrating Village Social Changes in Rural Sri Lanka*

[192] Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 106

[193] Administration Report of the Government Agent, Ratnapura district, 1912-13, p. 2, Colombo, 1914, quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 107

[194] Administration Report, Southern Province, CO 57/232/1931

[195] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/147/1901

'The impact of plantation agriculture on native farming, however, aggravated the problems facing the peasant sector.'[196] Commercial agriculture had inevitable consequences upon the feudal economy; it reflected a well change in land use; the food staples had been replaced by cash crops.[197] 'The development of the plantations, at least in the period 1850 to 1940, worsened the condition of the peasantry.'[198] The development of plantations of a few selected articles seriously checked the traditional food producing industries. 'The Colony is rapidly becoming dependent upon the three industries: tea, rubber and coconuts, and the causes of the decline of its other industries require careful investigation.'[199]

5.9 Hill Paddy: *disappearance of a prized rice*

Äl-ví or hill paddy, an important variety of grain, had been cultivated and consumed by the natives since time immemorial. Several varieties of hill paddy were cultivated; Lewis makes reference to seven of them.[200] The hill paddy and field paddy seem not to have been identical either in their physical appearances or properties.[201] 'There is but slight difference in color between the two kinds of rice, but the field rice consists of larger grains and is about one-third heavier than an equal quantity of hill rice.'[202] The

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[196] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p. 71

[197] Vandendriesen, I. H. 'Some Trends in the Economic History of Ceylon in the "Modern' Period", p. 6

[198] Karunatilake, H. N. S. *Economic Development in Ceylon*, pp. xvi-xvii.

[199] F. A. Stockdale, F. A., Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co-ordination and extension of Agricultural services.', CO: 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

[200] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 34.

[201] *Chemical examination* - A comparative examination of two kinds of rice showed that the hill rice was about 2 per cent richer in nitrogenous matter (gluten and albumen) and about 5 per cent poorer in starchy and saccharine matter than the field rice.
The details of analysis are given below.

	Field-rice	Hill-rice rice
Gluten	4 per cent	6 per cent
Albumen	1 per cent	1 per cent
Starch and sugar	72 per cent	67 per cent
Salt not estimated		

W. J. Vandort, M. D, Assistant Colonial Surgeon
Source: Administration Reports, Kegalle District (Appendix A), Chemical Analysis of the value of hill rice as compared with that of field rice, CO: 57/66/1875.

[202] Administration Reports, Kegalle District (Appendix A), Chemical Analysis of the value of hill rice as compared with that of field rice, CO: 57/66/1875; our words within brackets.

land used for swamp paddy can be utilized for that purpose from season to season and year to year; hill paddy will '...only grow upon a soil which has been many years undisturbed, and upon which the exuberant vegetation must be allowed to spring up and grow for a lengthened period before it can be again used for this cultivation.'[203] Like all the fine grains, hill paddy was grown in chenas; but it was grown as a monoculture crop rather than one of many mixed crops. When hill paddy was grown, the moist and swampy part of the chena was selected for the purpose and the rest for other crops. For example, the Uva provincial report records the following. 'In Maha Wedirata and Buttala Wedirata good crops of hill paddy are grown in chenas in moist and swampy ground...'[204]

The 'Hill-paddy is never sown more frequently than once a year. ... every crop taken requires newly-cleared land. Artificial manure is never applied; the ashes of the wood fires alone assist the fertility of the soil...'[205] The cultivation of this grain appears to have been extensive where the swam paddy lands and the irrigation water supply were scarce. 'Hinidum Pattu mudaliyar reports that El-Vi is more common than wet rice in his area, and paddy lands were scarce, food supply is afforded principally by the producers of the chena.'[206] *'Äl-ví* cultivation seems to have declined in areas where plantations encroached on the native's chena lands. 'There was not a very large cultivation of El-Wi (hill paddy), in fact, much smaller than usual.'[207]

It is maintained that the productivity of the hill paddy was low compared to the swamp paddy. 'When the land is moderately good and the season propitious, the return from this cultivation is generally ten-fold. ... It is computed that the labour of two men in this cultivation will produce sufficient for the subsistence of three persons. Swamp paddy is more prolific and the labour of cultivation easier, the labour of one man being supposed to be sufficient to raise the food of three and often more.'[208] But this conclusion is contradictory to the north-central administration report, which said that average yield from field paddy cultivation was 10 to 15-fold, while paddy chenas yielded 30 to 40-fold; hence paddy chenas were more popular than field cultivation.[209] This calculation could be acceptable since the chena lands are naturally more fertile than the swamp soil. The

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[203] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 34.
[204] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.
[205] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', pp. 40-41.
[206] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.
[207] Administration Reports, Central Province, Matale, CO 57/41/1867.
[208] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', pp. 40-41.
[209] Administration Report, North-Central Province, CO: 57/200/1919.

former were cultivated on the basis of land rotation and the latter was cultivated on the same plot of land in every season and every year when and where sufficient water was available. However, there would have been regional variations in productivity within a tolerable range.

On some occasions, the place of traditional hill paddy appears to have taken over by the new varieties of modern swamp paddy introduced by the British administration. The Administration Reports of Uva reported that '...an enterprising Buddhist priest, Pallegama Unnanse, grows a fine tract of Carolina paddy in similar land [moisture and swampy part of chena]. This is a hardy crop and suffers from no pests. The crop was most flourishing when I saw it. It is the only place in the province where this grain is grown. It does not need irrigation.'[210] This new variety seem to have taken the name of goda-wi or highland paddy instead of its traditional name of *äl-v'* or hill paddy. 'It is pleasing to find that a greater amount of goda-wi was cultivated.'[211] Bandarage maintains that, in the Kandyan province, the hill paddy constituted an insignificant portion of the total chena cultivation and peasant subsistence.[212] Nevertheless, it would have been important in the outlying Kandyan provinces. Referring to the native Kandyan kingdom, Pieris says; the '... hill paddy or *äl-vé* ' was less frequently grown, being considered unwholesome as a food on account of its 'heating' properties.'[213] This interpretation is quite contrary to ancient times, when hill paddy was highly valued and used as royal gifts on some occasions.

5.10 Fine Grains: *the story prior to wheat flour*

All grains other than swamp paddy were broadly referred to as fine grains, dry grains or swidden crops. These crops were predominantly cultivated in chenas and only on some occasions in gardens. For example, Matara AGA reports; '...the extensive cultivation of fine grain in gardens even under coconut trees, in owita lands, and any other small patch which may be

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[210] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.
[211] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/204/1921.
[212] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, pp. 96, 123.
[213] Pieris, Ralph. *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period,* The Ceylon University Press Board, Colombo, 1956, p. 40; makes references to Knox (1681) 5; Kandy Kachcheri Diary 19.1.1843, CGA 18/6 and Moon, Alexander. *A Catalogue of the Indigenous and Exotic Plants Grown in Ceylon,* Wesleyan Mission Press, Colombo, 1824.

private property.'[214] When compared to the extensive chena cultivation, these efforts appear to be insignificant.

'The term chena describes a process whereby plots of forest land are periodically cleared for the cultivation of dry grains. The method adopted for the purpose was similar all over the island...'[215] This form of agriculture is also known as slash and burn cultivation, where the land, rather than the crop, is periodically rotated.[216] With regard to chenas generally, it must be observed, that unlike paddy fields, they belong not to individuals, but to villages collectively; and it is by amicable arrangements among themselves, that it is in each season arranged what portion shall be allotted to each man.'[217] This tradition, however, was not strictly applicable to the whole island, nor equally to all time.[218]

Fine grain consumption seems to have been quite popular among the natives. There was hardly any '...province in Ceylon in which *chena* cultivation did not take place. This fact alone would suggest that the consumption of *chena* grains was widespread.'[219] This was markedly visible in the hinterland districts. 'Mr. S. M. Burrows, late of the Ceylon Civil Service, observed in an Administration Report that "paddy cultivation without chenas to jungle people is like ham without mustard to us."'[220] There were some sound reasons for the chena cultivation becoming much popular among natives. Its '...cultivation was less irksome, not taxable, and more productive in yield.'[221] It involved the minimum of labor and at the lowest estimate a forty or sixty-fold return.[222] This was much higher than the productivity of swamp paddy.

> ' Paddy was labour intensive and required more elaborate techniques of production and labour organization. Property relations in paddy were hierarchical in that a class of overlords who had superior rights to the land

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[214] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO 57/62/1873.

[215] Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, pp 155-156

[216] Karunatilake, H. N S *Economic Development in Ceylon*, pp 19-20

[217] Brodie, A Oswald Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalawiya, p 147

[218] Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, pp 28-29

[219] Wickremeratne, L A 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in the late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p 35

[220] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO· 57 /199 /1918

[221] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* pp 68-69

[222] Administration Reports, A letter by the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland (26th Sept 1882), CO 57/88/1882

> exacted a surplus from the cultivator. In contrast chena was labour extensive and relied on extremely simple methods of production and forms of labor mobilization. Property relations in chena were communal. Surplus appropriation by the overlords being generally absent...'[223]

Colonial policies on chenas: The British policy on chena cultivation was more unfavorable to the cultivator; it failed to understand the interrelated nature of fine grain and paddy cultivation and usually condemned the former as primitive and wasteful.[224] The colonial government's policy seems to have effectively reduced chena cultivation. 'In almost all parts of the country there has been a decrease in dry grain cultivation, owing to the restrictions imposed by the Government, no crown lands being allowed to chened.'[225] A uniform policy was not adopted by the administration in the every district. 'In some parts of the Island, such as the old Kandyan country, dry grain grown on *private* chena land or in gardens is free of tax. Elsewhere, one-fifth to one-fourth of the crop when the clearing is made with permission. When unlicensed the tax is doubled. In North- Central Province, and in the part of the Central Province, chenas on crown lands are free.'[226] A commission appointed to look into the tax on grain was of the opinion that the fine grain tax should be abolished. ' A majority of the commission is of the opinion that fine grain which is not taxed in the Kandyan provinces should be excepted from tax throughout the Island, and in support of their view the point to the small amount of revenue derived from this source.'[227]

The hostile policies of the Colonial administration and the absorption of chena lands by plantation crops seem to have reduced drastically the area of fine grain cultivation lands in the island. In 1833, there was one acre of chena lands for every two acres of paddy lands in 1833.[228] By the early 1880s, there were 650,000 acres under paddy, and about 150,000 acres

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[223] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 31.

[224] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p. 170.

[225] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon- XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/1877.

[226] Administration Reports, A letter by the Colonial Secretary of Ceylon to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland (26th Sept. 1882), CO: 57/88/1882.

[227] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/ 1877.

[228] Ameer Ali, A. C. M. 'Rice and Irrigation in 19th Century Sri Lanka', p. 253; makes reference to Blue Books.

under dry grain, Indian corn, and other cereals.[229] This was one acre of chena lands for roughly four acres of paddy lands. In some districts dry grains cultivation was extinguished during the period. 'In Galle district dry grain cultivation has almost entirely ceased.'[230] In Kalutara district there was no chena cultivation to speak of.[231] The decline in the area of fine grain cultivation essentially corresponded to a marked declined in fine grain consumption, as no productivity gains were achieved to offset the shrinking cultivation The increasing population during the period further reduced the per head consumption of fine grains.

It is unfair to say that all British officials were inimical to slash and burn cultivation. There were occasions in which some of them aired their views in support of the chena grower. 'A late governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, recorded that "It is manifest that a village restricted to its paddy land alone could not continue exist"; ...People with a bias against chenas should go in to a ripening kurakkan chena, which has the unforgettable smell of a barley field; and probably objectors to chena would take a practical view of chenas, if they could be in the foodless condition of many villagers for even a day or two each month of the year.'[232] From the planters' and the colonial administration's point of view chena cultivation was irrational, but it was quite rational from the cultivator's point of view as it was the '...safely valve to peasant subsistence. Where irrigation and paddy harvest failed, and/or taxes on paddy fields were extremely onerous, the peasants had necessarily to turn to shifting cultivation to stay alive.'[233] On any reasonable ground; slash and burn cultivation can not be justified. By the same token, no reasonable argument can be found to discourage or stop dry grain cultivation. A reconciliation of these opposing objectives could be found if proper initiatives were taken as suggested by Brodie 'Nothing but the introduction of the use of manures can check the inherent evils of the system.'[234]

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[229] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883*, 1883, p. 42.

[230] Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Ceylon - XVI, Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Taxes on home-grown Grain and the Customs Duties on Imported Grain - 1877, CO: 57/72/1877.

[231] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO: 57/101/1887.

[232] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO: 57/199/1918.

[233] Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 101; makes reference to Ludovici, Leopold. *Rice cultivation: Its Past History and Present Conditions*, J. Maitland and Co., Colombo, 1867, p. 26 and *AR 1884*, Report of Baumgartner, p. 67A.

[234] Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p. 45

Chena cultivation: As with the paddy fields, chena cultivation was carried out twice a year at the *maha* and *yala* seasons. In many instances, gingerly (sesame) seems to have been cultivated for the yala season as a second crop on the lands which were used for other grains in the maha season. 'The gingerly crop, which follows kurakkan within the year on the same chenas...' [235] Both seasons were strictly related to the monsoonal patterns as the chena cultivation depended exclusively on rainwater. The land '... cannot be irrigated, is reserved for the cultivation of what are called "fine grains,"...'[236] Maha was the season in which most of the important fine grains and vegetable were cultivated In a chena many kinds of grain and vegetable seeds were sown together and the crops harvested separately.[237]

Apart from rice, chena crops included kurakkan, maize, millets, mun, menen gingerly, chillies and vegetables.[238] The records from different districts give a clear picture of what kinds of dry grains were being cultivated in chena lands. They included kurakkan, menèri and sesame.[239]

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[235] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO 57 /199/1918

[236] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 45

[237] The following imparts a rough description about chena crops and their market values

Participation Grain.& C.	***Period within which reaped or Gathered***	***Value Per bushel***	***Yield Fold***
Kurakkan	3 months	Rs 0 50 (as high as 75-fold in forest chena)	50 or 60
Hin meden	- do -	Rs 0 50	360
Kansa meden	1-1/2 months	- do -	240
Mun	3 months	Re 1 00	18
Landesi	- do -	- do -	100
Tana	- do -	- do -	6(?)
Ulundu	- do -	- do -	6(?)
Aba-mustard	- do -	- do -	100
Mirisi-chillies	10 months	Rs 0 30-Rs 0 40	200
(The seeds of these are mixed in small quantities within kurakkan seed, and sown broad cast)			
Tala - gingelly	3 months	Rs 2 00	300
Kollu-gram	- do -	- do -	6
Kapu-cotton	10 months	Rs 4 00 per cwt	2 cwt cotton pods for 1/6 of a bushel of seed

Source Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO 57/54/1871

[238] Karunatilake, H N S *Economic Development in Ceylon,* pp 19-20 and Wickremeratne, L A 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p 34

[239] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-

'*Kurakkan*, or Natcherin, ... it will grow upon land which is not good enough for hill paddy. Many different seeds are sown with *Kurakkan* and are cropped afterwards; ...'[240] '... In these chènas various other plants, such as millet, &c. ; as also varieties of gram, &c., are cultivated.' [241] 'Some of the minor products in chena which do not appear in other district so far are Sudara, Idaliringu.'[242] 'Among the dry grains, kurakkan, sami, varaku, payaru, and some uluntu are used for human consumption, while gram and a large quantity of uluntu and kollu are used for feeding cattle and horses. Gingerly is only an oil-producing grain, and the oil is used by the people as a cooling application for the head, particularly before that important event - their weekly bath. The oil is also used as an article of food in the place of ghee.'[243] Only in the northern province is gingerly oil used as described here. Ameer Ali maintains that the contribution made by the chena products to the total food consumption of the island was not sufficient to supplement the shortage of rice, so that the best solution was to increase the capacity of rice production.[244]

Kurakkan: Many kinds of fine grain were cultivated in the island, of which kurakkan was the chief. [245] As a staple food, it seems to stand next to rice; in some districts it came in first place. Up to a certain point in the British administration, the consumption of *kurakkan* was considered to be harmful to humans, so that the official policies followed suit.

The peasants in some parts of the island seem to have shown special preference for kurakkan over rice. 'Again, their partiality to Kurakkan as a food in preference to rice, is remarkable. I believe the principal reasons for this are the absence of any tax upon the cultivation, the ease which with the

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Western Province', p. 45.

[240] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', pp. 41-42.

[241] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalawiya', p.145.

[242] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.

[243] Administration Reports-vol. 1, Northern Province, CO: 57/157/1904; Oil bath seems to have been a popular practice among the Jaffna Tamils. It was changing during the British periods. '...Jaffna historical oil bath which is neglected, we are sorry to say, by a certain section of the fastidious who with greater contempt than even a foreigner look down upon anything that is Eastern and extol the custom of the West.' See: Katiresu, S. *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula and a Souvenir of the Opening of the Railway to the North,* American Ceylon Mission Press, Jaffna, Ceylon, 1905, p.103.

[244] Ameer Ali, A. C. M. 'Rice and Irrigation in 19th Century Sri Lanka', p. 254.

[245] Capper, John. 'The Food Statistics of Ceylon', p. 21; This fine grain is referred to by a number of names such as Kurakkan, kurahan or Natcherin. The English equivalent is finger millet and the generic name is *eleucine korakana.*

cakes are prepared and the length of time they can be preserved. These cakes are much more portable than boiled rice, and easier carried to the chenas, where the men and boys spend much of their days. They are used in the form of a biscuit, the flour being kneaded up with water, with the addition of a little salt and green chilly, and baked for five or six minutes.'[246] 'There was a very large cultivation of kurakkan, and the harvest was very abundant one; it is curious how fond the villagers are of cultivating this grain.'[247]

It was maintained that in the chenas inferior and unwholesome grains for coarse foods were cultivated.[248] Differences of opinion existed about the wholesomeness of kurakkan when eaten alone and it was quite certain that wherever this was the case the people were emaciated and out of condition, especially the children.[249] The '...chemical analysis has recently shewn that kurakkan contains more nutriment than rice, which is quite at variance with the opinion generally held in former times.'[250]

> ' Some discussion recently has arisen regarding the use of kurahan, which forms so large a part of the food of the people. In the opinion of the medical men of the Island I believe it is held to be injurious. In my opinion this statement should be modified by saying that the constant use of kurahan as a food, especially when improperly cooked, is injurious. There can be little doubt that kurahan, *per se*, is a nourishing and healthy grain if properly cooked, although most natives consider it is a source of "giniyama" (ගිනියම්), that is of a heating nature. Eating as porridge it is excellent. But the village method is this: the grain is ground and made into a paste with water and then beaten out flat in a chatty and then put over the fire and baked. To the sight and touch the product is like a thick leather; and I have occasionally used it for gun wads. ... If the villagers were in the habit of using milk and gee with kurahan porridge believe he would have an excellent food.'[251]

In addition to 'Kurakkan roti' as explained in above references, foods such

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[246] Administration Reports, North-Western Province, Puttalam District, CO 57/41/1867.

[247] Administration Reports, Central Province, Matale, CO 57/41/1867; Here AGA calculates the cost of paddy cultivation and kurakkan and concludes that paddy is less costly. But the GA disputes this claim and agrees with the other conclusions elsewhere in these reports.

[248] *BPP 1847-1848*, vol. 42, Enclosure in Emerson Tennet's " Report on Finance and Commerce", p. 120; quoted in Bandarage, Asoka. *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, , 1985, p. 101.

[249] Capper, John. 'The Food Statistics of Ceylon', p. 21.

[250] Administration Reports, Kandy, CO 57/41/1867.

[251] Administration Reports, North- Central Province(report says it has been reproduced from the administration report for the year 1888, by Mr. Levers) CO: 57/147/1901.

as kurakkan *'pittu'* and *'talapa'* were prepared and eaten with dishes. The latter was a kind of porridge. In addition to the main meals, certain kinds of sweetmeats were also made with kurakkan. All of these foods were prepared with kurakkan flour and seeds were never boiled and eaten like rice. The nutritional value of this crop seems not have been widely understood by the British administration and it restricted its cultivation through a number of regulations. This crop can be stored for a long period, e.g. up to ten years without being destroyed by insects; it was a useful insurance against famine.[252]

Kurakkan consumption was low where the conditions for paddy cultivation were benevolent. Especially in the wet zone more rice was eaten than fine grain, since artificial irrigation for paddy cultivation was not necessary there. Even in the dry zone dry grain cultivation was low where irrigation was available. It was very seldom that kurakkan was grown in localities where there was an abundance of water supply for rice cultivation, unless it was grown in very small patches.[253] 'The people of Kuruvita, Nawadum, portions of the Meda and Kadawatu, and Atkalan Korales, and part of Kukulu Korale consume nearly the whole of rice. The people of low-lying parts of the Kadawatu and Meda Korales, and the Diyapotagam Pattu of Kolonna, live chiefly on kurakkan and Indian corn; rice enters but very little into their ordinary food consumption, not because it is not preferred, but owing to its not being procurable in large quantities.[254] Again on the Demala Pattu: 'More attention is here paid to Chena than to that of low land paddy, and the difficulty of raising a rice crop, and the great risk of loosing it altogether from want of sufficient rain, are alleged with some reason, as their excuse.'[255] In general, dry grain consumption was more evident in areas where irrigation facilities were insufficient for paddy cultivation.[256] 'As a rule the provincial agents of government were not unduly perturbed by the low levels of rice consumption. Notwithstanding their rather academic speculations on *chena* cultivation, they believed that the mass of the people especially in the rural areas consumed considerable quantities of *chena* grains, certainly very

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[252] Öhrling, Staffan. *Rural Change and Spatial Reorganization in Sri Lanka: Barriers against development of traditional Sinhalese local communities,* Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series,no.34, Curzon Press Ltd.,London,1977, pp.109-111.
[253] Capper, John. 'The Food Statistics of Ceylon', p. 21 (footnotes).
[254] Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO: 57/93/1884.
[255] Administration Reports, North-Western Province, Puttalam District, CO 57/41/1867.
[256] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'The Grain Consumption and the Famine Conditions in the late Nineteenth Century Ceylon', p. 34.

much more than was suggested in the *Blue Books*.'[257] In districts where sufficient kurakkan was not produced, it was brought from other districts where it was cultivated in excess. With the introduction of wheat flour during British rule, the place of kurakkan was gradually taken over by the newcomer. Other dry grains and many kinds of native yams and tubers suffered mainly for the same reason.

5.11 Summary

The staple and most preferred food of the native was rice, though in some localities low preferential foodstuffs were consumed. This was mainly due to the unavailability of sufficient quantities of rice for consumption. In drier districts, the main substitute for rice was *kurakkan,* if not *palmyra* products; in wetter districts its place was mostly taken by certain kinds of vegetables such as jak, breadfruits and also yams. The staple food of the immigrant laborer and the early European was rice. Two kinds of paddy - swamp and hill paddy - were cultivated and consumed. The productivity of the both varieties was moderate, but lower than India. Parboiled rice was mostly consumed with curries, the raw rice was used to make sundry foods such as sweetmeats. The actual amount of rice consumed by the native was always below his preferred and potential amount of consumption. The deficit was made up with low preferential staples. This deficit indicated that there was a potential market among the natives themselves to absorb the increasing production.

From its inception, the British administration continued the import of rice. On some occasions in those early days, the cost of rice imports exceeded the total export earnings. The financing of the rice imports was taken over by the plantation sector after it began to dominate the economy. The plantations brought Indian coolies as well as some natives to the market as new consumers, while the natural growth of population was also high during the period. The per capita income increased as a result of the dynamic nature of the economy. All theses factors contributed to increasing the demand for rice. As a consequence, the per capita imports of rice increased during the period. At the beginning of the plantations, the

[257] ibid., p. 41. Author makes reference to; Report on the Kegalla District, A.R. 1890. P.J.23. Report on the Vavuniya District, A.R. 1892, p. D. 22. Report on the Uva Province, A.R. 1887, p. 212A. Report on the Mullaitivu District, A.R. 1873, p. 196. Report on the Badulla District, A.R.1884, p. 58A.

imported rice was mainly consumed by the non-paddy growers. They were estate laborers, coolies on public works, urban dwellers, fishermen, traders and others who were directly or indirectly connected to the plantation. Over time, the native paddy grower became more and more dependent on imported rice.

The hill paddy was a special kind of grain belonging to the rice family. It was grown only on swamp and moist parts of the chenas. When the necessary conditions for swamp paddy were not available, much attention was paid to the hill paddy. In the plantation districts, the growing of this crop diminished with the decline in the lands available for chena cultivation. On the whole, hill paddy cultivation in the island declined and came to the brink of extinction during the period.

Dry gain cultivation and consumption had long been familiar among the natives in every part of the island. It was the same at the beginning of the British administration. The inimical colonial policies and the absorption of chena lands by plantation agriculture caused a decline in the extent of lands available for dry grain cultivation. Although the aggregate and per capita grain consumption increased during the period, the corresponding consumption of dry grain declined with the diminution of land utilization for the purpose, since parallel productivity gains were not achieved. The vacuum created by increased grain consumption and the decline in fine grain consumption was filled by other grains, namely, imported rice and wheat flour.

The duty on imported rice fell entirely on the consumers. The local rice producer also paid a tithe. The import duty was not a protective one to the local producer. Nor did it discourage the consumption of imported rice. However, with increasing imports, the rice import duty made a considerable contribution to the colonial government's coffers.

Cheap rice was imported into the island in large quantities' thus checking the interest in expanding local rice production. Only when imported rice was not coming in, through problems in the supply sources, did the local producers received a temporary respite. The imported rice was showy and had more consumer attraction than the local varieties. The local varieties were considered to contain more nutriments than the imported rice. Local rice processing reached an advanced stage with the introduction of hulling machines.

It was maintained that rice was not efficient in Ceylon. There were many backward characteristics in the traditional paddy culture. The salient feature was the low productivity compared with many other rice growing countries. Some steps were taken by the colonial administration to modernize the paddy sector, although not always successfully. The native

paddy producer, for his part, was getting used to modern methods at a slow pace.When the British took over the administration of the island food cultivation had deteriorated to a certain extent. However, the natives of the interior were producing surplus food. Traditionally, peasant agriculture received government patronage, but until the second half of the nineteenth century none of these reached the peasant. Some hostile policies of the British administration adversely affected the local food production. The plantations absorbed the food-producing lands into commercial crop production. These were the lands in the wetter parts of the island and could produce foods without resort to artificial irrigation. On the one hand, some of these lands were absorbed by the large-scale investors with the blessings of the colonial administration while, on the other hand, the small food producers themselves converted their lands from food to commercial crops.

6

Non-Grain Foods and Intoxicants

In this chapter we examine the changes brought about in the consumption of non-cereal foods and intoxicants in British Ceylon The discussion mainly concerns the consumption of fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, dairy products, cane sugar and alcohol, opium and hashish As in the previous chapter, we expand the discussion to include some distantly related issues in order to make the picture wider and clearer

6.1 Fruit and Vegetables: *success story*

6.1.1 General Remarks

As might be expected, many of the products belonging to this category made an important contribution in the natives' daily food intake during the period The species, variety and quality varied according to the season, soil and climatic conditions The most striking feature of this category, in contrast to a number of other consumer articles, is that it was principally confined to domestic production

Production was essentially in the hands of small producers or peasants who cultivated them in their gardens, chenas and fields, generally in addition to the grain and other garden products such as areca nuts and spices 'The bread-fruit tree, the jack, orange, and mango, as well as garden of plantains and pine-apples, might be mentioned among products cultivated and of great use to the people of Ceylon, in fact, there is not a native land-owner or cultivator in the country who does not posses a garden of palms or other fruit trees, besides paddy fields '[1] Similar information

[1]Ferguson John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*,p 50

appears in the colonial writings referring to many quarters of the island. 'The rice diet of the Sinhalese villager is largely supplemented by vegetables, such as sweet potatoes and numerous other varieties of yam; jak fruit and breadfruit are also very generally eaten, and orange and plantains are within the reach of all but the very poorest. Coconut is of course a must valuable article of food...'[2] The Kalutara district report contains the following information about fruits and vegetables. 'Fruits and vegetables are obtainable all over the district, but both quantity, quality and variety leave much to be desired.'[3] In the northern province palmyra was an important source of food to the native in different forms. 'The edible products of palmyra supply one-fourth of the food of the inhabitants in the Jaffna peninsula.'[4] In the Sabaragamuwa province the people depended for their food supply upon coconuts, jak fruits, chilies, manioc or cassava and yams of all sorts in addition to rice and fine grain.[5] The plantains were considered as a vegetable in Trincomalee district report, which said that it formed an important component of the diet of the poorer classes, and was not a luxury or subsidiary article.[6] Referring to the English varieties in the up country, the late officer of the Ceylon Rifles says; 'All English flowers and vegetables grow to perfection, particularly potatoes and cabbages. Peaches will not ripen, and cherries hardly bloom. These trees, stimulated by perpetual spring, become evergreens; but strawberries are very fine, also citron and cape goose berries .. '[7] Ferguson maintains that in many districts the garden cultivation of fruit and roots would prove more profitable, though the paddy field is far more popular among natives.[8]

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[2]Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/99/1886, The coconut palm tree is referred to as 'universal tree ' It gives food, drink, domestic utensils, material for building and thatching, sugar, wine, oil, fuel wood, and fodder See Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year,* p 50

[3] Administration Reports - vol 1, Kalutara District, CO 57/157/1904

[4] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p 48, The Tamil poets provide details of 800 different purposes to which the palmyra can be applied and Tamil proverb says 'it lives for a hundred thousand years after planting and lasts for a hundred thousand years when felled ' See· Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p 52

[5] Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO 57/93/1884

[6] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO 57/108/1889 Some varieties of plantains (bananas) are prepared as dishes to eat with rice The reporter may be referring to these varieties as well as others eaten as a fruit Similarly, Ferguson considers sugar-cane as a vegetable, although it is not prepared as a dish for rice. See Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p 56 See also p 211

[7] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon,* vol II, p 7

[8]Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*,p 39

6.1.2 Production and Marketing

There were quite sufficient varieties of fruit and vegetables which agreed with the different climatic and soil conditions of the island. In up country areas, especially close to the British estates, European vegetables were chiefly cultivated and, in the other parts of the island, primarily the local varieties were cultivated.

The jak tree which is grown in almost every part of the island was much more useful to the native as a seasonal source of vegetable and fruit (see **chapter 4:** ***vegetable & fruit***). This valuable tree '...is seldom planted, but springs up from seeds which have been scattered by accident around the dwellings of natives. ...are much used as food. The timber is perhaps the most useful grown on the Island, ... '[9] 'I tried to get rid of a large number of jak seedlings from my own grounds, but no one thought the offer worth accepting.'[10] Even if this was the case in wetter districts, the natives in the drier districts with hostile climatic conditions must have planted jak trees in their gardens with considerable pains.

The cultivation of European varieties of vegetable had taken a new twist over time, according to accounts furnished by a number of writers. The native appears to have responded positively to the higher demand for these varieties in the market. 'English vegetables are grown to a considerable extent in the higher districts, especially in the neighbourhood of Palugama.'[11] 'In the Gravets division of Nuwara Eliya there are no paddy fields, but foreign vegetables are extensively and successfully cultivated.'[12] 'English vegetable is profitable source of cultivation to inhabitants of Udukinda.'[13] 'Native vegetables are cultivated in every chena and village garden. There is a very flourishing industry in English vegetables in Udukinda division, and especially in the neighbourhood of Wilson's Plains (Palugama) and Padinawela, which is few miles below Nuwara Eliya.'[14] 'In and about the neighbourhood of the Station itself almost every English vegetable can be grown. Potatoes ... have been cultivated with considerable success though not to any great extent ... It has often struck me as strange, that while Bangalore, in Southern India, the apple and English fruits are grown very successfully, in Nuwara Eliya, at a considerably greater

[9] Lewis, R E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 47, This is true of the wet zones of the country but special care was needed to grow jak trees in the dry parts of the country.
[10] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/115/1891
[11] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57 /199 /1918
[12] Administration Report, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57 / 201/ 1920.
[13] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/176/1909.
[14] Administration Report, Uva Province, CO. 57 / 201/ 1920

elevation and in a climate much more English, their cultivation has proved a failure. Attempts have been made to cultivate English grain, but the result has been unsatisfactory.'[15] 'Potatoes are no longer grown in any quantity at Nuwara Eliya, and cannot be grown at low elevation in Ceylon. The supply of yams, however - an excellent substitute for potatoes - grown in the villages, was ample.'[16]

There was some sort of temporary complementarily between the expansion of coconut plantations and certain kinds of vegetables and fruits, but not with coffee/tea and rubber. 'There has, however, been a very considerable increase in the production of other food-stuffs, such as plantains, manioc, pumpkins, and other vegetables grown on the lands recently cleared for coconut cultivation - a supply which more than compensates for the loss in fine grain, and one which must have a very beneficial effect on the health of the population.'[17] '...Plantation of plantains are very extensive throughout the province, whenever there are new openings for coconut cultivation, plantain trees occupying the spaces between the coconut plants until they get to a certain age.'[18]

The local grower generally had a surplus of fruit and vegetables which penetrated from the market of his immediate vicinity through to newly established plantations, urban areas and even to foreign vessels calling at harbours. The peasant cultivated vegetables and root crops, chiefly for his own consumption; any surplus produce was marketed within the immediate vicinity of the village.[19] '... [G]arden and vegetable cultivation is increasingly popular, a market for the produce being provided at the weekly fairs established at various centers throughout the district.'[20] 'The cultivation of vegetables for market is an industry which appears to be increasing in Pata Dumbara and Pata Hewaheta.'[21] Fruits and vegetables grown in large quantities were to be found in all markets.[22]

The European variety of vegetables appears have kept its edge over the local varieties in the market. The '...European vegetable gardens are daily

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[15] Administration Reports, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya, CO 57/41/1867.

[16] Administration Report, Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.

[17] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/99/1886.

[18] .Administration Reports, North Western Province, CO: 57/134/1897.

[19] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp. 321-322; makes reference to Kandyan Peasantry commission, p. 77.

[20] Administration Reports, North Western Province, CO: 57/204/1921; see also: Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 57; and *The Report on the Economic Survey of the Kurunegala District*, 1940.

[21] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO: 57/137/1898.

[22] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 92.

expanding, but supply is much below the demand (owing to the large quantities daily sent to other towns and out stations), and this should the advisability of throwing open more lands for vegetable cultivation.'[23] Over time the supply appears have over taken the demand. For example the Uva administration report said that if the additional markets were available, the English vegetable growers were anxious to increase their cultivation.[24] 'A certain amount of fruit and vegetables is also grown, more for sale than for home consumption. There is a plentiful production of oranges in most parts of the province, and of pineapples mainly in the division of Yattikinda and Viyaluwa. Market gardening in the country round Wilson's Bungalow is an industry which is steadily expanding, and the growers send away considerable quantities of vegetables of many English varieties.'[25] 'About five hundred baskets of English vegetables are sent daily to Colombo *via* Ambewela...'[26]

The native in the drier districts of the island did not produce plantation crops so he had limited opportunities of linking with the market mechanism (**see appendix 2: *Monetization***). One of the links was the disposal of his surplus vegetables on the market. From the north central province '...large quantities of vegetables of various kinds and Indian corn raised on chenas were sent out of the province early in the year to Colombo and up-country by rail, and there was usual barter of produce to carts from Jaffna, Kurunegala and Matale Districts.'[27] 'In the Hambantota district... an immense quantity of vegetables and fruits are grown, which is impossible to give any estimate of, beyond stating that not only is there sufficient for local consumption but a great deal more, which keeps the markets of the Southern province as far as Galle, and even beyond to Ambalangoda, supplied with such vegetables and fruits as pumpkins of sorts, melons, murunga, plantains, sweet potatoes, yams, limes, wood apple, ... The sale and exchange of these products places the inhabitants of the Giruwa pattu in most comfortable circumstances; and not only is there no want of food, but that they have a fair cash balance in hand is evidenced by the readiness with which the grain-tax and the labour commutation are paid up.'[28] 'Giruwa pattu which is within the north-east zone, fruits and vegetables are raised in enormous quantities in the chenas, and supply the markets of the province as far as Galle, and even beyond. In the Batticaloa district it is the same, and the traveler on the North-

[23] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO· 57/134/1897
[24] Administration Report, Uva Province, CO 57 / 201/ 1920.
[25] Administration Reports - vol I, Uva Province, CO· 57/161/1905.
[26] Administration Report, Uva Province, CO: 57 / 201/ 1920
[27] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO· 57 /199 /1918
[28] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/99/1886

road will in like manner find in the bazaars kekiri (cucumbers) and other vegetable grown in chenas.'[29]

A certain quantity of fruit and vegetables was exported in the form of supplies to the vessels calling at the Colombo harbor. 'The greater demand at Colombo for fruit and vegetables, owing to the calling of so many steamers at that port, has also given an impetus to the cultivation of garden produce, and a brisk trade in these articles has sprung up in villages which a few years ago were considered beyond the influence of the Colombo markets.'[30] 'The old coffee has almost died out-in and about the town of Nuwara Eliya and in the adjacent villages English vegetables are grown in very large quantities, the cultivation of vegetables for shipping in Colombo and for local sale being the chief local industry among those villages who live at high elevations. The whole division is exceedingly fertile and prosperous.'[31]

On some occasions the native seems to have used his earnings from the disposal of garden produce to buy his main article of food - rice. The '... more civilized division of Matale... The people eat little or no kurakkan, as they can, as a rule, afford to buy rice from the proceeds of the sale of their garden produce - coconut, orange, limes, pepper, areca nuts & etc. The people are more enterprising in Matale South...'[32] The development of the communications during the period helped to increase the cultivation of vegetables and fruits. The Report of the General Manager of the Railway provides a good indication of the extent of locally produced fruits and vegetables which were transported by rail, although it was not the only mode of transport during the period. '... *fruits and vegetables* - The increase in these products mainly due to the dispatch of large quantities of plantains and vegetables from Polgahawela, Rambukkana and Kandy which shows an increase... Of the decreases, Maho, Galgamuwa and Anuradhapura...and Ambalangoda, Panadura and Matara.'[33]

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[29] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/99/1886.

[30] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/86/1882; The port of Colombo received a considerable number of vessels annually. The shipping data for 1910 indicate that Colombo had developed into the seventh greatest port in the world and the third in the British Empire. The other ports above Colombo in descending order were; New York, London, Antwerp, Hamburg, Hong Kong and Rotterdam. see: Dharmasena, K. *The Port of Colombo, 1860-1939*, The Ministry of Higher Education (Sri Lanka), 1980,p. 56

[31] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/140/1899.

[32] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/112/1890.

[33] Administration Report, Report of the General Manager-Railway, CO: 57/201/1920.

6.1.3 Supply to Plantations

Among other local products, considerable quantities of fruit and vegetables reached consumers in the plantations. This was an interesting mutually beneficial link between the traditional and modern sectors of the economy and it also was contrary to the popular dualistic hypothesis. 'The peasantry produced...a variety of vegetables and root crops which were consumed locally. Now, such subsidiary crops were also demanded by the estates, so that neighbouring villages adopted their cultivation extensively. In the Nuwara Eliya and Bandarawela districts, for instance, villagers had converted most of their lands to vegetables; the temperate climate here allowed the cultivation of "European" vegetables, which were widely distributed to plantations.'[34] Referring to the estate and public works coolies and the bazaar population, Uva reports say that '...broadly speaking, the only local products they consume are vegetables, fruit, and the little meat they indulged...'[35] 'In lower Hewaheta and Dumbara there are many lands in which vegetables alone are grown. The produce is partly consumed locally, a considerable quantity finds its way to the markets of Kandy, Hatton, and other places.'[36] The two cities referred to here are in the middle of tea plantations. Similarly, from other districts, including the dry zone, vegetables and fruits reached the plantations.[37] Michael Roberts gives a list of articles including vegetables purchased by estates from the local producers. 'Not all the estate-supplies were imported. Coconut and coconut produce, dried fish, some rice, vegetables, straw, and poultry were purchased from local producers. Above all, there was a large demand for barrels ... while the Indian labour consumed arrack in large quantities.'[38] However, the commercial bond between the immigrant labour and the native producer was not always strong. 'The commercial interaction of plantation labour with the villages was curtailed by the facilities for growing vegetables and grazing cattle on the estate and by the provision of basic articles of

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[34] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp 321-322, makes reference to Kandyan Peasantry Commission, p. 69, makes reference to Ceylon Administration Report Series.

[35] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO. 57/99/1886.

[36] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO. 57/134/1897.

[37] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO: 57 /199 /1918; Administration Reports - vol I, Uva Province, CO 57/161/1905, Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/112/1890.

[38] Roberts, Michael 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p 163

consumption from an estate store.'[39] Bandrage says that this was the subsistence agriculture interest of the immigrant plantation labourer and it never extended beyond garden plots around the 'lines' or 'barracks' in which they lived.[40] The immigrant labourer had hardly any time or land to produce for himself other than the cultivation of vegetables.

6.1.4 Local Deficits

There had been localised deficits in production for one reason or another. Nevertheless, taking the whole country; there was no gap between production and consumption. 'Fruit is generally scarce, though there should be a fair market for pineapples, oranges and mangoes, if good varieties are cultivated.'[41] 'There is an extraordinary want of fruit trees in this district, the demand for fruit is great. With the poorer natives fruit forms an important part of the diet, and is not a luxury ...'[42] 'There is always a deficiency of fruit and vegetables, due to the fact that the people of province have not yet become accustomed to cultivate vegetables either for domestic use or for sale...'[43] One of the reasons for the deficit might have been the erosion of garden culture by the plantations. 'Jack and mango and other trees are being ruthlessly cut down for estate purposes, and no one takes the trouble to replant any.'[44] 'The lack of fruit is much to be deplored, plantains grow well, but are only grown as a preliminary to coconuts, to which in fact every product seems to be sacrificed.'[45] The insufficiency of fruits was also reported in Talpe Pattu, in the Southern province, although there was an excess production of vegetables. 'Orange and other kinds of fruits are treated by the ordinary villager more as luxuries than common articles of food. Their consumption locally is consequently rare. The growers, as a rule, take them to market for sale, and the money thereby realised enables them to provide themselves with other necessaries of life. Surplus vegetables and coconuts are similarly disposed off.'[46]

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[39] de Silva, S. B. D. *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 291.
[40] Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p. 217.
[41] Administration Reports, North-Western Province - Puttlam District, CO: 57/147/1901.
[42] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/108/1889.
[43] Administration Reports, North Western Province, CO: 57/143/1900.
[44] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/115/1891.
[45] Administration Reports, North-Western Province - Chillaw District, CO: 57/147/1901.
[46] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/147/1901.

6.1.5 Government Support

The British administration supported, although not in a big way, vegetable and fruit production in the island. One of the methods applied to promote cultivation was school gardening. 'Vegetable cultivation has now become more general, and the increase in area is largely credited to the work of the school gardens.'[47] 'I have started vegetable gardens in each village school, and have been helped by the Director of Public Instruction. Teaching the young may perhaps do good. The villagers are growing more coconuts in their villages.'[48] Experimental gardens were another method of encouraging cultivation. 'With the object of introducing different kinds of fruit trees and foreign products, three experimental gardens have been started one near Anuradhapura, another at Kekirawa, 15 miles from Dambulla, and the third in the North at Kirigollewa near Medawachchi. The Anuradhapura garden started most successfully, but the floods of 1877 showed that the site was too low, the greater portion of the plants were washed away. The garden at Kekirawa grows a large variety of fruit trees - orange, guava, custard apple, soursop, which are doing very well.'[49] Attempts had also been made to propagate plantation agriculture among the villagers, mixed with fruit, vegetables and yams. 'Cinnamon, cocoa, Liberian coffee, manioc or cassava have been planted with very good results. Cassava is gradually being grown over the whole Province - the people are very fond of it. It requires but little water, and grows easily; when once thoroughly introduced, it will form one of the chief staples of food.'[50] 'The cocoa tree, three years old, are in full bearing - soil and climate seem particularly favorable to the growth of this product. Fruit trees of various kinds - the guava, orange, Fiji-apple, sour-sop, mangoes, custard apples and mulberry do admirably. Ornamental trees of various kinds have been planted with marked success.'[51] The success of fruit and vegetables during the period was perhaps attributable more to the private initiatives taken by small producers than to official support.

6.1.6 Imports

A few kinds of fruit which were not produced in the country were imported, but had no impact on the local articles. The obvious reason might have been

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[47]. Stockdale, F. A., Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co-ordination and extension of Agricultural Services.', Administration Reports, CO: 57 /198/1918/1919/1920.
[48] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/134/1897.
[49] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/79/1879.
[50] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/79/1879.
[51] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/79/1879.

the sumptuous nature of these articles. 'Fruit is now beginning to be imported from Australia - apples, pears, and grapes being frequently on sale...'[52] Nevertheless, the importation of chillies and other spices seems to have affected the local production. 'The markets have been well supplied with vegetables and fruit of all kinds, chiefly home grown, but potatoes, onions, and chillies continued to be imported from India and elsewhere in large quantities.'[53] 'Chillies form an important item of diet, and very large quantities are annually imported They grow well in many localities, more particularly in the northern province ... There is no doubt that the Colony could produce a large quantities of chillies...'[54] 'Chillies are a commodity which might be produced in the Island to a far greater extent and a considerable reduction in the money sent out of the country for this article would be to the good.'[55] A similar account is made about other spices which were imported into the island 'Ginger and turmeric are crops for which there is an opportunity in Ceylon, and there appears to be no reason why the requirements of the Island should not be met by local production.'[56]

The Ceylonese never consumed potatoes as a staple, but they did consume them as a dish or curry mainly with rice The per head importation of potatoes and onions increased over time The former was not very successful in Ceylon, but the latter could have been produced in sufficient quantity.

TABLE No. II
PER CAPITA IMPORTS
(lbs. per year)

Year	Potatoes	Pulses	Onions
1880-82	0.7	n a	2.6
1890-92	1.3	n a	3.2
1900-02	2.7	5.8	5.1
1911-12	3.5	5.8	7 1

Source Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and Social Development*, p 110

[52] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887
[53] Administration Report, Western Province, CO 57/128/1895
[54] F A Stockdale, F A , Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co-ordination and extension of Agricultural services ', C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920
[55] Administration Report, Report of the Director for Agriculture, CO 57/ 232/1931
[56] ibid

6.1.7 Summary

During the period under review, the demand for vegetables and fruit increased: plantation agriculture, urban consumers, non-growers from the traditional sector itself and growing income contributed to the higher demand. The improved transport facilities, new town centres, weekly fairs, itinerant traders and village boutique-keepers were important links in the chain. The local producers from all parts of the country responded positively to the market incentives. Direct official support had only a marginal impact on the growing production. A rather significant factor contributing to the success of local vegetable and fruit production was the ready and secure domestic market. The small quantities of imported fruits were insignificant in comparison with the immense local supply. Neither local consumers nor the immigrant labourers or planters turned appreciably to foreign produce. As perishable goods, this category had a natural protection from foreign competition. A shift in consumption from local vegetables to European varieties occurred during the period, but it was essentially confined to the produce within the island.

All in all, vegetable and fruit consumption relied on the local supply; a considerable diversion of consumption occurred in such commodities as chilli, onions, turmeric and ginger. As a whole, the pressure on local resources from the non-diverted consumption of fruit and vegetables more than compensated for the resources released by the diverted consumption of spices.

6.2 Meat: *as condiments*

6.2.1 General Remarks

The typical average native was not a big meat eater under normal circumstances. The exception to this generalization were a few aborigines known as *Veddas,* who lived in the deep thickets, mostly in Bintenna, and probably a few Sinhalese living close to Vedda settlements.[57] Under special

[57] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO. 57/176/1909 and Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO. 57/93/1884; The Vedda people, under the reign of the king of Kandy, paid their tax in meat and other wild products See· Dewaraja, Lorna Srimathie The Revenue of the King of Kandy *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Sri Lanka),* vol xvi, 1972 p. 22 The origin of the Vedda is said to go back to the period in which the island was part of the Indo-African-Australian continent (Gondwanaland) where aborigines of each continent used to live. During the

circumstances, particularly when famine threatened, people living in jungle areas turned to forest products and to game for their food supply as a last resort. Under normal circumstances, the Moorish community appears to have consumed more meat than the Sinhalese and Tamils. The average Ceylonese used to eat meat as a condiment for the seasoning of their dishes.

6.2.2 Beef

Cattle have been the native's closest companion for centuries. They were essential for ploughing, trampling paddy or helping as beasts of burden and, ultimately, as a source of dairy products and manure. However, cattle were not considered as a source of meat supply by the overwhelming majority of the natives. At the beginning of the 19th century Percival could say that 'The Cinglese supply our garrisons plentifully with beef, fowls, eggs and other articles of the same sort, at very moderate rate, as they seldom make use of them for their own consumption: beef in particular they never taste, as the cow is an object of their worship.'[58] 'It is only on very rare occasions that cattle are killed for food, the hides are invariably thrown away...'[59] 'Meat both buffalo and black cattle, is consumed by the Moorish population living along the coast, but the large herds of cattle which grazed in the extensive pasture lands of district are destined for the up-country market.'[60] The Moorish community were the traditional beef consumers in the island at the point of contact with Europeans. The Kandyan

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Dutch occupation of the island, Veddas were to be found all over the island, including the Jaffna peninsula and, at the end of British rule, they were to be found only in scattered groups as a result of intermarriage with the other communities and an appalling death rate. For an extremely interesting story depicting the lives of the of Vedda aborigines and their transition from the troglodyte, food gathering stage to the crude beginnings of hut dwellers and food producers see Spittel, R L *Vanished Trails The Last of the Veddas*, Oxford University Press, London, 1950 and by the same author, *Wild Ceylon· Describing in particular the lives of the present day Veddas*, The Colombo Apothecaries Co Ltd , Ceylon, 1924 and also Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon An Account of the Aborigines and of Part of the Early Civilisation*, Luzac & Co , London, 1909, pp 3-206

[58] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 220; The author appears to have speculated that the cow had been considered as an object of worship by the Sinhalese, since they mostly refrained from beef consumption I could find no other historical evidence to confirm this opinion

[59] Broody, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, north-western Province', p 53 The author may be referring to the Moors as beef consumers here, since there was a high concentration of them in the district

[60] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO 57/143/1900

Peasantry Commission report holds the following opinion about the average Kandyan villager. 'Animal husbandry for the purpose of supplying milk or meat to the towns is not an avocation practiced by the Kandyan villager...Muslim butchers from neighbouring towns and bazaars very often visit villages and buy cattle for purposes of slaughter.'[61]

Christianity, new urban settlements, immigrant Europeans, and the up-country plantations brought new consumers to the equation. At the same time, the modernization of the traditional economy loosened the strong bond between man and his cattle. '... a larger increase in the stock is prevented by the number of animals taken to other parts of the Island, as well as to large consumption of beef in this part of the Province by the Moors, as well as the supply of Transport and Shipping in the Galle harbour. Cattle are not made use of to plough or to trample corn in the Galle District, and consequently, are reared only for sale.'[62] 'Beef, and mutton (so-called, but more properly goat) are eaten by the more well-to-do classes, chiefly among the Christian population on special occasions, such as weddings, beef is supplied to the guests, even among the villagers who do not ordinarily eat it.'[63]

Beef consumption was gradually widening among the natives who previously had not consumed it. The necessary conditions were forming within the society itself for such consumption. The highly modernised western province provides good testimonies of changes in meat consumption among the natives. 'The demand for butchers' meat has increased of late years...'[64] The '...use of meat seems to be extending among those who formerly confined themselves almost exclusively to a vegetable diet.'[65] 'In some Korales poultry and meat are scarce. There is a steady number of persons who eat meat, in spite of antagonistic Buddhist feeling.'[66] The plantation districts showed quite similar tendencies. 'The increased amount of ready money in the hands of the villagers who have either sold lands or been earning high wages on estates has led to a great demand for meat, and regular butcher's shops have been opened in the vicinity of large earnings such as Kawdupelella, where considerable number of low-country men have congregated.'[67] In all these cases beef seems to have been

[61] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, Ceylon Session Papers, 1951, pp. 76-77
[62] Administration Reports, Southern Province, Galle, CO 57/41/1867.
[63] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907.
[64] Administration Report, Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895
[65] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/140/1899
[66] Administration Reports - vol I, Western Province, CO: 57/161/1905.
[67] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO. 57/170/1907

consumed more than any other variety of meat. Nonetheless, the trend had regional variations. 'Beef is scarce: the people are too poor to buy meat; cattle owners lack the necessary enterprise to raise and send stock to distant markets.'[68]

6.2.3 Cattle Stealing

In some extreme cases, a few natives enjoyed the meat of a stolen beast. This was a new phenomenon that appeared in the Ceylonese society during the colonial period It was a social evil as well as a grave deterrent to the breeding and keeping of cattle. The '... cattle-stealing continues to be the national crime, and as it pays, it is, I regret to say, on the increase.'[69] 'Beef is not eaten by the natives of interior and when it is, I regret to say, too often the meat of a stolen beast.'[70] No one singular factor had created this new trend, but the root cause seems to have been the breaking down of the traditional socio-economic structure. According to the tradition hitherto prevalent in the country, cattle had been left to graze freely on the vast areas of pasture and forest lands. For example, Brodie says 'Buffaloes in large numbers stray over the plains and through the jungles of the District;...'[71] Stall feeding was unusual among the natives. This had become incompatible with the new economic structure of the country. One obvious outcome was the loss of meadows and forests with the expansion of plantations, leading cattle to trespass on gardens and corn fields. 'I am strongly of the opinion that many cases of cattle stealing and alleged cattle stealing are the natural outcome of cattle trespass, which is the course of this district.'[72] The stray cattle were the major enemy of the peasant, the whole season's work of a family might be destroyed in one night by the invasion of cattle.[73]

The cattle on the estates were not allowed to roam in the meadows and jungles. They did no trespassing and were safe. 'Thefts of cattle from estates are stated to be rare ..'[74] The prevalent poverty, among others, also had took

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[68] Administration Report, Southern Province, Hambantota District, CO 57 / 128/ 1895
[69] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887
[70] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO· 57/112/1890
[71] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 52
[72] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO 57/134/1897
[73] Administration report of the Acting Director of Agriculture for 1938, quoted in Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 79
[74] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon - 1919 C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920

its fair share of the new practice. 'The philosophy, so speak, of cattle stealing in this district at least, is somewhat akin to that of dog-stealing in England. It is caused chiefly by the poverty of those who engage in the traffic; for, so far as I can learn, there is more stealing and secreting of cattle to extort money than to slaughter either for sale or out of revenge; the instance of the former being as three to one of the latter.'[75] On some occasions it was a product of gambling, another social evil that seems to have spread during the period. 'Cattle stealing and theft of produce is increasing greatly due to gambling.'[76] Previously unused beast hides realized financial fortunes during the period. Money was officially paid for the hides of wild animals; cattle and cattle owners also seem to have become victims of the money consciousness of some unscrupulous cattle rustlers. 'Cattle, especially let loose by the owners to graze in the jungle. These are driven to places less frequented by people, killed and hides removed. The offence generally escaped detection.'[77] Still, the flesh of stolen cattle was important in some localities. 'There can be no doubt too that a good many cattle are stolen and killed for the sake of the flesh.'[78] According to reports; there was a good correlation between cattle stealing and the modernization of society. In the provinces where modernization was high, cattle stealing was also high and vice versa.

The maritime people, who had received western influences since the Portuguese, were coming into contact with the interior people, and they were followed by vices previously unknown to the interior. 'The natives are most law-abiding, and not nearly so quarrelsome as in some other Kandyan Districts; there has been no serious crime, but several cases of highway robbery occurred, and there was undoubtedly cattle-stealing on the borders of the Kurunegala and Trincomalee districts. Large public works usually attracted bad characters from the maritime districts, and I have had some trouble in apprehending and punishing criminals, who were almost in variably "low-country" men. The work in the minor courts has greatly increased with the growth of a town population and the influx of Tamils and Moors who have settled along the roads.'[79]

In another district, some natives were quiet and settled some were not. 'The Tamil population of the district is settled and quiet. The Moorish population of the Musalai Pattus is less law abiding, and there is supposed to prevail amongst them at all times a certain amount of undetected receiving of stolen cattle and other property from the adjacent districts. Of late their energies

[75] Administration Reports, North-Western Province, Kurunegala, CO: 57/54/1871.
[76] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[77] Administration Reports - vol. I, Batticaloa District, CO: 57/161/1905.
[78] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907.
[79] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/99/1886.

have been diverted to the more profitable, as well as honest, occupation of elephant trapping.'[80]

6.2.4 Other Meat

The keeping of animals such as pigs, sheep and goats was not a common practice among the people, although there were some signs in this direction during the period under review. 'No sheep are found in the villages, though a few goats may be met with here and there which are owned and carefully tendered by Tamils. Pork is regarded as a luxury to be included only in feasts of ceremony and importance.'[81] In some coastal areas where the European influence was received prior to the British there was a tendency to rear animals for meat. The rest of the society seems have not shown sufficient interest in this state of affairs, although conditions there were ideal for the purpose. 'Sheep and goats of several breeds are found in considerable numbers all along the coast. Towards the interior the native entertain some prejudice against the rearing of them; and indeed, owing to the habits of these animals, it would be troublesome keeping them in a district covered with forest and abounding in leopards.'[82] 'The breeding of sheep in dry districts can be recommended, and the breeding of goats upon some coconut estates has been successfully carried on ... Upon coconut estates the breeding of pigs can be profitably undertaken, and these are successful herds of pigs on some estates.'[83] The Moorish people's dislike of pig breeding and pork is a universal phenomenon and it was the same in Ceylon in their settlements. '...a large proportion of natives along the coast being Muhammadans, pigs are only to be met with in two or three of the larger villages. An English breed has lately been introduced, thrives well, and is being gradually disseminated.'[84] The local production of pig meat did not increase considerably during the period under review.

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[80] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/86/1882.

[81] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/112/1890.

[82] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p. 52.

[83] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon-1919,C.O: 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

[84] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p. 53.

6.2.5 Poultry

Referring to the chicken offered for dinner in an interior rest house, one planter says 'The flesh of this peculiar breed of fowl is, however, more sweet and tender than that of any other kind.'[85] A former officer of the British army said that only a few precious fowls' eggs were available to travellers on the interior roads.[86] Even these eggs were not up to the European varieties well into the 20th century. '...the domestic fowl has remained very near to the wild type, and lays an egg only about half the size of the average fowl's egg in Europe...'[87] In certain districts of the island, such as where the capital city was located, poultry products were consumed in great quantities; while in other parts it was the opposite. '... eggs and fowls are consumed in great quantities.'[88] '...the absence of poultry is specially noticeable. The only explanation given is that the villagers are such strict Buddhists that there is no market for fowls and ducks. The opening of new estates will probably modify these scruples.'[89] 'Fowls are becoming rather difficult to buy in some parts of the district, a large number being taken to Colombo.'[90]

Poultry farming was given only scant attention in the island during the period as it had been before (**see chapter 4: *meat & fish***). 'Fowls are generally procurable in the villages, but no systematic attempt is made by the people to rear poultry, and the price of poultry has risen considerably.'[91] 'It is pity that poultry rearing is not systematically carried on in the district.'[92] This was quite true even in the comparatively modernized western province. 'Poultry are kept and reared in an idle way...'[93] There were reasons for the lack of attention and the scarcity of poultry. 'High caste Sinhalese who are the majority of the province appear to think that poultry rearing is beneath them.'[94] 'Poultry and eggs are generally scarce and dear. One reason is that the Buddhist portion of the community has a prejudice against poultry

[85] By a Planter, *Ceylon in the Fifties and the Eighties, A prospects and contrasts of the Vicissitudes of the Planting Enterprise During a Period of Thirty Years and of Life and Work in Ceylon,* A. M.& J Perguson, Colombo, 1886, p. 21.
[86] A Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles. *Ceylon,* Vol. II, p. 1.
[87] Cook, Elsie K. *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev. by K. Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953, p. 170.
[88] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/99/1886.
[89] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO: 57/101/1887.
[90] Administration Reports, North-Western Province- Puttlam District, CO: 57/147/1901.
[91] Administration Reports, Kalutara District, CO: 57/134/1897.
[92] Administration Reports, North-Western Province- Puttlam District, CO: 57/147/1901.
[93] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/112/1890.
[94] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/143/1900.

rearing. Another is that such local supplies as there are, are bought up by Moormen hawkers and other collectors, chiefly for Colombo markets and hotels.'[95] 'It is to be regretted in view of the great demand for fowls and eggs that there is generally a prejudice among the people against keeping poultry.'[96] In addition to the religious and social attitudes, there were economic reasons which hindered poultry farming. 'Vegetables, fruit, and poultry are scarce and dear, and very little attempt is made to improve the supply, in spite of the large demand of a European garrison. All suitable lands near the town are taken up for tobacco cultivation, which is generally exceedingly profitable.'[97] But there were still hopes for a considerable expansion of production in future in parallel with the development of transport and communications. The price of '...eggs, and fowls has very considerably increased owing to the recently begun export of articles to Colombo by steamer. I have little doubt that this increase will be largely enhanced when speedy transport by rail is possible, to the advantage of the producer and to the loss of the local consumer... The prices have risen already quite 300 percent, so that the former cheapness of living in Jaffna has disappeared. This greatly affects persons of small fixed income. Families who could formerly afford fowls and eggs have to give them up. The effect will, of course, be good in forcing people to produce more of these articles for their own consumption.'[98] The consumption of chickens and egg had increased during the period, but it had been virtually confined to the urban areas. The limited supply in the country went to the new consumption centers, possibly at the expense of the interior consumer where chickens were kept in an idle manner. At the close of the British administration there had not been many changes in poultry farming. 'Poultry keeping, if practiced at all, is done on a very small scale. The villager will have a few birds and will sell the eggs to an itinerant Muslim trader or to a nearby boutique.'[99] The itinerant trader brought the villager's cattle, poultry and goats to the city centers.[100] This were much more similar to what the native practiced at the beginning of the British period.

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[95] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907.
[96] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO: 57/170/1907.
[97] Administration Report, Eastern Province, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/128/1895.
[98] Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/140/1899.
[99] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, Ceylon Sessional Papers, 1951, p. 77.
[100] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 57; makes reference to *The Report on the Economic Survey of the Kurunegala District*, 1940.

6.2.6 Meat Imports

As many kinds of food items; varieties of meat and poultry products were also being imported during the period. 'A large number of cattle, sheep, and goats are imported, but supplies are barely sufficient...'[101] 'The supply of fowls, eggs... shows no sign of failing, although an enormous quantity must now be consumed yearly. The demand is in part met by importation of fowls, ducks, turkeys... from India.'[102] The '... greater portion ... of the beef and mutton required in the large towns of the islands is... imported in the shape of cattle and sheep...There is no doubt much scope for the people of Ceylon to do more to meet the local demand for such food supplies, although the natural pasturage is rather poor as a rule.'[103] 'The average imports of cattle, goats and sheep into the Colony amount to an annual value of approximately Rs.1,000,000, and imports of produce, tinned and frozen meat, and tinned milk to a value of over Rs. 2,000,000. Since the beginning of the war there has been a decided fall in the imports of cattle, sheep and goats owing to transport difficulties ... Of the 1918 imports, there were 1,389 cattle and 326 buffaloes for slaughters, 379 cattle for draught purposes, 289 milch cows, and 1,236 milch buffaloes. This indicates that the Colony has been compelled to provide its own meat supplies.'[104] The average annual import of live animals for the ten years prior to 1922 stood at: cattle 13,000, sheep and goats 89,000.[105]

Previously unknown kinds of meat were also imported into the island during the period; although mainly for the high income consumers. '...pheasants, partridges and other game are brought in ice from China. These, however, at present form the luxuries of the richer classes.'[106] Some reports complained about the unavailability of popular kinds of meat in Ceylon. 'I cannot help expressing my surprise that some mercantile firm cannot be found sufficiently enterprising to import jerquet meat ("charqui") from South America.' [107] '... Frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand is still not procurable in Colombo owing, probably, to the cheapness of the

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[101] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887

[102] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887

[103] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, pp 52-53

[104] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon- 1919, C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920

[105] Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p 96

[106] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887

[107] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/57/1872

meat supply locally. If the military authorities would undertake to use frozen meat for the troops, a market would, I am told, be opened at once.'[108] The consumption of imported meat was a new practice that emerged during this period.

6.2.7 Game

Ceylon has had its own name and fame for the wild animals since antiquity. 'Ever since the dawn of history the island of Ceylon has been known to the rest of the world as a paradise of wild game.'[109] The most important source of meat supply to the native was game. It was quite sufficient within the traditional consumption pattern and the stable population. There was not an immediate threat of diminishing of supply; rather there was an admirable balance between hunting and the regeneration of wild animals. This long-standing equilibrium was disturbed by the socio-economic environment created by the colonial administration. The ordinary folk lost their source of food supply while the wild animals came to the brink of extinction. The centuries-old harmony between the man and animal turned into a nostalgic memory of the dead past. We classify this type of consumption under the heading of exhaustive consumption (**see chapter 3**).

The game '... was an important item in the food supply of the villager, but since fire arms have become so numerous the trade in dried flesh, skins, and horns has vastly increased, and game has proportionally decreased. It is hoped that the recommendation of the committee now sitting will suffice to meet the evil and protect the villager and prevent the rapid extermination of game.'[110] Similar accounts can be found from many parts of the island and a few of them are quoted here. 'The rapid diminution of all wild animals, and birds, throughout the whole of Ceylon, is very noticeable, though not matter of surprise, when the enormous number of guns in the Island is considered, and that there is no restriction whatever on the destruction out of season of all living creatures serving for food, and found on the extensive crown lands' throughout the country.'[111] 'The rapid extinction with which all game in the Island is threatened cannot but be a subject of regret to those who take an interest in the country. This district formerly abounded in game. Five years ago one could not have traversed the jungle paths on which I recently

[108] Administration Report, Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[109] Cook, Elsie K. *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p. 167.
[110] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/101/1887.
[111] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, Batticaloa, CO: 57/51/1870.

accompanied his excellency the Governor without seeing numerous deer, pigs, an abundance of pea-fowl and other game. On the occasion to which I have referred the amount of game seen was, I believe, one red deer and one drove of pigs; and to this may be added the interesting fact, that one of the party once heard the cry of a pea-fowl. The existing tax on fire-arms is nominal, and the ordinance has itself become a dead letter. The number of cheap "Brummagem" guns in the country is enormous, and the destruction of game carried on wholesale. With this source of food should not be availed of now, without proceeding to annihilation: it seems to me to be an obligation on the part of the British Government, which has introduced the means of this indiscriminate slaughter, to intervene, to preserve to the next generation a share of its patrimony. Steps of this nature have been found necessary in America and in most civilized countries, and the necessary legislation cannot but be admitted here sooner or later; it is to be hoped it will not be delayed too late.'[112]

Wild life had become an easy prey of a few imprudent people who wanted to make quick fortunes without exerting themselves. 'The unrestricted possession and use of fire-arm is in other respects objectionable, and has been the subject of other complaints to me by the people. In the villages in the neighborhood of Trincomalee, for instance, farm servants very frequently borrow a gun, leave their work for days together, and go about shooting; they generally succeed in killing an elk or spotted deer, and carry the flesh to the town, where it is sold at very remunerative rates; in the meantime the farmer has no control over them, and advances made by him to the servants are in some cases lost.'[113] The Nuwara Eliya administrative officer referred in his annual report to the wholesale killing of wild animals in the northern part of the island, although it was not within the purview of his office, in order to show the seriousness of the destruction. 'For instance in the part of Vanni of Northern Provinces. .... the annual slaughter of spotted deer by Moormen. Who come into these wild parts for the purpose of drying and carrying away quantities of what must be very unwholesome meat. The number of spotted deer killed every year by organized bands of Moors is something wonderful, and I believe if this wasteful destruction were put to a stop to the impression made on the herds of deer by ill-armed villagers would be found very inappreciable, and not calling for interference'.[114] It was the same in Southern province. 'A recent visit to the sporting district of Hambantota has shewn me how urgently here, as elsewhere, legislative interference was required to

[112] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, Batticaloa, CO: 57/54/1871.
[113] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/54/1871.
[114] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/54/1871.

prevent the rapid annihilation of all game throughout the Island '[115] 'The game slaughtered by procures is mostly dried and sent to the coffee districts for sale to the Tamil coolies, and realizes high prices The flesh of wild buffalo is stated to be worth 30 rupees in the Badulla bazaar '[116] Not only was the flesh used for local consumption, but skins and horns were also important for exports 'Some check will be put by legislation on the present wholesale destruction of elk and deer for the sake of this skins and horns The trade is almost entirely on the hands of Moorman hunters and gypsies and reaching very large proportions in this district villagers are deprived of source of food supply which they have learnt to fall back upon bad seasons '[117] 'We can never hope to increase the stock of wild animal food unless we adopt some measures to prevent its speedy extinction by the bands of Moors and Gypsies who are rapidly destroying it '[118]

In some instances, the ordinary villager seems to have killed wild animals for bartering purposes rather than for the traditional purpose of his own consumption 'The illicit shooting of game is merely for the sake of meat as food, and for bartering purposes Shooting is mostly confined to Willachchiya Korale in Nuwaragampalata on the Mannar and Puttalam side and in Tamankaduwa on the Trincomalee and Batticaloa side '[119] Animal skins and horns were exported during the period and some of these were collected officially for export, which might have encouraged the killing of wild animals 'Of other minor exports affording some trade to native huntsmen are deer-horns, The exports of "hides and skins" is considerable '[120] This practice also made a considerable contribution to the decline of the island's wild animals For example, the Vauniya-Vilankulam district report carries this reference The ' elk and deer were scarce, having been slaughtered wholesale during the drought of the preceding year, mainly for the hides '[121] 'Skins are not brought to the Kachcheri, as the Moorish traders give a higher price than the government for them '[122]

The ruthless destruction of wild creatures had gone beyond the control of the administration, which had laid the necessary foundation to this end ' The working of the Game Ordinance can scarcely be deemed a success The number of shooting licenses granted in this Province last year was four,

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[115] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/57/1872
[116] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO 57/57/1872
[117] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/105/1888
[118] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57/108/1889
[119] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO 57/134/1897
[120] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p 87
[121] Administration Reports, Vavuniya Vilankulam District, CO 57/105/1888
[122] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO 57/134/1897

whilst reports of fire-arms are everywhere to be heard in the jungles, and the destruction of game is going on so rapidly as to threaten a speedy extermination of all kinds in Ceylon. The last number in the register of gun licenses at Kurunegala is 7,915, that figure showing the number of licenses issued for guns in the district of Seven Korales alone; the last number in the Puttalam register is 6,458. But besides these there are large numbers of unlicensed guns. The amount of the license, one Rupee and twenty five cents per gun, which serves to license it for ever, being a such a trifle, that the payment is looked as a farce. The customs returns show the number of guns imported for the last ten years as 1,000 per annum.'[123] Contact with Europe appears to have produced similar destructive results in many Asian countries. 'The trade with Europe brought firearms to the Far East; forest animals were hunted in increasing numbers. Probably everywhere there have been bigger animal populations living in and feeding on the rain forest within the life-span of many of the currently living big trees than there are today.'[124]

Referring to a GA circular on elephants and deer, the AGA of Negombo said that the laws on elephants are adequate, but those on deer are not. In order to prevent them being exterminated, he suggested enacting a new law controlling both imported and locally made guns and the export of deer hides. The writer also emphasized the need to protect wild buffaloes.[125] The wild animal had become an easy target, not only for commercial purposes and food, but also for the sport of high society;. It was gratis for a nominal license fee. At the turn of the 20th century, 36,450 deer were shot for sport annually.[126] 'It is quite time that the shooting of these useful and valuable animals for sport should be interdicted altogether in Ceylon, as well as elephant-catching as now practiced by traders from India.'[127] The report argued, however, that the number of animals killed for sport was negligible. 'People seem to think that it is in the interest of sportsmen that it is sought to restrain the wholesale killing of game, quite forgetting that there are many parts of the Island that a sportsmen never visits, where game supplies much of the food of the people, and where it should be preserved against extinction for them. Tax your sportsman as you please, he can afford to pay for the luxury; but tax also the wandering stranger who lives by poaching and nothing else.'[128] Referring to elephant shooting as a sport, one officer says

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[123] Administration Reports, North Western Province, CO: 57/66/1875.
[124] Whitmore, T. C and Burnham, C. P *Tropical Rain Forests of the Far East*, Clarenden Press, Oxford, 1975, p 219.
[125] Administration Reports, Diary Notes from Negombo AGA, CO· 57/101/1887.
[126] Dawood, Nawaz *Tea and Poverty*, p 54.
[127] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/101/1887
[128] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO· 57/108/1889.

'That elephant shooting is not a very dangerous sport is proved by the fact of one officer having killed, it is said, 1200, and some others nearly as many, with a loss only three sportsmen ..'[129] Major Thomas Rogers alone killed 1400 elephants in the early days of coffee cultivation.[130] In addition, a large number of elephants were caught and exported to India and some of them were retained for local work. 'A large number of elephants are employed by the Government on public works, who are captured in periodical hunts ...'[131] Both elephant exports and using them for local work went beyond the Europeans' intervention in the island's affairs, but they were not a threat to the survival of the herds. The wholesale elephant killings for the protection of plantations and for sport and large exports were a new phenomenon inspired by new commercial values. It became a game without rules.[132] We do not elaborate here on the large-scale shooting and export of elephants and the destruction of bears and leopards, as these do not directly link with our theme. A number of laws were passed during the period to protect game and wild animals.[133] And whatever initiatives were taken to protect wild animals during the period, Cook at the end of British rule in the island that 'The wild animals of the jungle have enormously decreased in numbers as to render it necessary for the government to make arrangements for their protection.'[134]

6.2.8 Summary

Considerable changes occurred in meat consumption patterns during the period. Animal flesh became a marketable commodity Beef consumption was spreading in society as opposed to the previously observed abstention from eating meat. At least in the urban and commercialized areas meat was

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[129] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon*, p 128 See Tennet, Sir James Emerson(1859) *Ceylon*, vol II, Longman, London, 1860, pp 271-404 for an account on Ceylon elephants during the British period, their habitats, habits, elephant catching, exports and shooting

[130] Dawood, Nawaz *Tea and Poverty*, p 54, makes reference to Storey, Harry *Hunting and Shooting in Ceylon* (1969) (Reprint), p xvi

[131] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon*, p 128

[132] The discussion here is essentially confined to animals from whom the villager received his meat, and we purposely overlooked the deliberate destruction of other animals, since these are not within our sphere of our interest

[133] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p 87

[134] Cook, Elsie K *Ceylon Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p 170; makes reference to Henry W Cave *Golden Tips*, London 1904, pp 334-335

becoming a regular article of diet as incomes increased.[135] A part of the meat consumption in towns and plantations was met by the local supply. The itinerant trader was the link between the producers of the interior and the consumers. The local supply had not positively responded to the changes in demand, so that the increasing consumption was met either by imports or by the reduction of local stock. The latter is particularly relevant to the cattle population of the island. The Buddhists generally objected to the rearing of animals and poultry for food; the Muslims objected to the rearing of pigs and the Hindus respected the cow as sacred.[136] Nevertheless, the country had a considerable number of Christians. The Muslims were opposed only to the rearing of pigs and not all Buddhists and Hindus were strict religious adherents. They had no hesitation in killing wild animals for consumption. As a result of all that, the local supply was not increasing. The decline of local stock, especially the buffaloes, had an adverse affect on peasant cultivation. 'The slaughter-house returns have been examined, and show that a very large number of locally-raised buffaloes is annually slaughtered, chiefly at the Colombo slaughter-house. In the interests of paddy cultivation in the Colony this practice should be checked.'[137] The large scale destruction of game for commercial purposes affected the meat consumption of ordinary stock by people living in the interior. No alternative source of supply was drawn upon to meet their requirements. It is reasonable to assume that they could have turned to dried fish as a substitute for wild flesh. A part of the local meat production reached the plantations, more specially the dried flesh of wild animals.

6.3 Fisheries: *abundant, under- utilised resources*

6.3.1 General remarks

From a local standpoint, fisheries probably come next to agriculture in importance insofar as they affect the population.[138] As with meat, the average native did not consume large quantities of fish. The situation was somewhat different in the coastal areas and, to a certain extent, in settlements close to freshwater fisheries, although in both cases consumption was

[135] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO. 57/101/1887

[136] Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, pp 55-56.

[137] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon -1919, C O·57/ 198/1918/1919/1920

[138] Administration Report, Report of the Government Marine Biologist for the years 1919 and 1920, CO 57/ 201/1920

seasonal except for river fish.[139] The western province report, for example, states 'Large quantities of fish, both dry and fresh, are eaten in the villages bordering the coast...'[140] This was the case in many coastal settlements around the island. However, the people living in some rare privileged localities had opportunities to shift from one source of supply to another according to the season. 'Fish is largely caught during the north-east monsoon, and with rice forms almost the sole food of the majority of the people. It becomes so cheap as to greatly affect the sale of meat. ... In the south-west monsoon sea fish is dear, but tank and river fish and meat supply its place.'[141] The people living in the hinterlands were principally dried fish consumers. 'Dry fish is imported from the sea ports, and enters largely into the daily food consumption; the supply of fresh fish is very limited.'[142] Although the average level of consumption was low, the country's fish production potential was always high. 'The fisheries in Ceylon are one of the most important of capabilities of the Island; its coast on every side may be said to teem with fish of the best kinds for all the purposes of home consumption and exportation and a more ample field for lucrative speculation cannot possibly present itself.'[143]

6.3.2 Freshwater Fish

Freshwater fish had long been an important source of food for the people living in close proximity to artificial irrigation tanks, rivers and streams. The industry could have been well developed with the new economic prospects under colonial rule. The tank of the dry zone was an abundant source of good fish supply, but had unfortunately been almost entirely ignored, except by the villagers in the immediate vicinity of tanks and only a small quantity of fish was sent on ice to Colombo by train from Anuradhapura district.[144]

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[139] Tank fishing was important in the dry season. In addition, a small quantity was procured during the rainy season when certain kinds of fish came out to the shallow fresh water from the tank. Sea fishing had its own cycle according to the pattern of the monsoons.

[140] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/99/1886.

[141] Administration Reports, North-Western Province- Chillaw District, CO: 57/147/1901.

[142] Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO: 57/93/1884.

[143] Pridham, *Account of Ceylon and its Dependencies*, 1849, p. 409. Quoted in Pieris, Edmund. 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p. 58.

[144] Pearson, Joseph. 'The Fishing Industries', In Plate Compiled. *Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industry and Resources*. Plate Limited, Colombo, 1924, p. 118 and Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 90.

The natives in the drier districts of the island had usually caught their fish during the dry season when the water level of their irrigation tanks fell. Large quantities of fish were caught with their traditional fishing baskets. Not all the fish caught were consumed fresh, instead most were dried and preserved for use as condiments for their dishes, perhaps until the next catch. 'Fish is largely eaten by the people when the water in the tanks fails, the villagers assemble with fishing baskets and catch immense quantities of fish and this is divided among them according to the village pangu. The fish seem to have the power of the burying themselves deep in the mud, or they would soon be exterminated in tanks. I have been astonished to see tanks, which a few months before were perfectly dry, stock with good-sized fish when it filled. Immense quantities of sprats are caught and dried. There are several fish which are bony and disagreeable. The best kinds are "lula" and "walaya." The former is an eel-like fish and grows to about 8 lb. or 10 lb. in the rivers, and average is 1 1/2 lb. or 2 lb. in the tanks. The "walaya" is a fine fish, which grows to an immense size and is generally caught with line and live bait. It has a faint taste of salmon, ... I have never heard that any fish here are unwholesome at any time of the year, as some kinds are in the up-country streams. A good deal of dried fish is sent from Tamankaduwa to other districts.'[145] Some writers seem to have had a poor impression of the quality of freshwater fish, but especially of the river fish. 'Fresh-water fish are very plentiful but there are many kinds of which the natives will not eat, and most of the river fish are, I think, unwholesome.'[146] Compared with tank fishing, river fishing seems not have been popular in the country. 'There is very little river fishing, though fish abound in the Mahaweli-ganga. Fishing with nets is carried on by Moormen to some extent in the river, where it runs through the Yatinuwara and Udunuwara divisions. There is no fishing with nets by Sinhalese villagers, and the Moormen do not engage in it as a regular occupation but more as a part time there as a means of adding to their food supply.'[147] The native's fishing was not always compatible with the sustainability of the industry. 'Fresh water fish are also taken in many of the streams and tanks, but the methods of catching them adopted by the villagers are destructive to the immature fry.'[148] In addition to this, the most destructive modern methods appear to have been employed on some occasions. The central province administration report says '..four cases

[145] Administration Reports, North-Central Province CO. 57/147/1901 (the report states that this part is quoted from the administration report for the year 1887 written by Mr Levers)
[146] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887.
[147] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO· 57/170/1907
[148] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/176/1909

were instituted for killing fish with dynamite...'[149] However, there is no evidence that these methods were widely applied by the natives.

The colonial administration paid some attention to the renovation of old irrigation tanks in the dry zone from the second half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, freshwater fisheries did not receive their fair share of this endeavor. 'We have spent, and are still spending, vast sums in constructing and repairing tanks and channels to store up and distribute water for the cultivation of our rice fields, and to extend the food producing areas of the country. Why not at a small additional cost stock these waters with good wholesome supply of fish as well?'[150] There were occasions on which administration officers had taken private initiatives to breed new kinds of freshwater fish, but the colonial government did not adopt fish breeding as an integrated policy. 'Two fresh batches of trout ora were got out from England at the beginning of the year, and turned out very well. I hope we shall soon be independent of these importation, as our own fish are now breeding; The trout first put down in 1887 are thriving wonderfully; some of them are now as much as 6 lb. in weight, and this growth for a three-year old fish is simply marvelous... It shows how well adapted Ceylon is for them and it by means of a Game Ordinance we can only keep them from being destroyed by native poachers, poison, and dynamite, there will be great addition to the food supply of the country. There is another fish that I have lately introduced from South India. I still look forward to the time when this matter of fish culture will receive the support and encouragement of Government. So far nothing has been done, and all pecuniary assistance has been refused.'[151]

6.3.3 Fishing Community

Fishing was by social tradition confined to certain castes.[152] However, the European influence converted most of them to Roman Catholicism. For example, the Mannar district report states that 'The people employed in this fishery are chiefly, if not entirely, Roman Catholics...'[153] The east and the west coasts of the island have two distinctive fishing seasons associated with the two monsoon winds. As a consequence of this seasonal character, there was some seasonal migration among the more enterprising fishermen;

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[149] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO: 57/176/1909.

[150] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/105/1888; Here the author reports on experiments carried out in India.

[151] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/108/1889.

[152] Jennings, Sir Ivor (1948). *The Economy of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, 1951,p. 56.

[153] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/63/1874.

Sinhalese fishermen from the southern, western and north-western coasts migrated to the east coast and eastern portion of the northern coast during the south-west monsoon period, and there was a corresponding migration of Tamils from the north and east coasts to the northern portion of west coasts in the north-western monsoon.'[154] Sinhalese fisherman were invariably referred to as southern fishermen. The east coast fishing grounds around Batticaloa were popular during the south-west monsoon. The local people engaged in shore and tank fishing while the migratory fishermen did the deep sea fishing.[155] The deep sea fishing '...is entirely monopolised by the Sinhalese from the Southern and Western provinces, who secure enormous catches which they salt and ship to other markets, so that the people of the Province benefit very little by this industry. I am hopeful, however, that they will in time profit by the example set them by the Sinhalese, and that sea-fishing will eventually be taken up by both Moors and Tamils. The first attempt has been made during the present year by some Moors living on the coast at Sangamarutu, who have adopted the use of the Sinhalese sea nets.'[156] After another three years; the deep sea fishing was still confined to the same migratory fishermen. 'The deep sea fishing carried on almost exclusively by the Sinhalese from the Southern Province furnished excellent fish to all the sea coast villages. large quantities of dried fish cured by them were also sent up-county'.[157] Nevertheless, the fishing industry on this eastern coast was not a large one. It was a '...a small fishing industry on the coast, this industry was at first began by Sinhalese from the south-west coast of Ceylon, and they still come in considerable numbers during the south-west monsoon and occupy "wadias" near Kalmunnai and other places along the coast. Some of the Moors have learnt the industry from the Sinhalese, and now carry it out on their own. ... Most of the fish caught by the Sinhalese is exported from the district, that caught by the local people goes mainly for local consumption.'[158] In the northern province; fisheries were very importance for its the economy. It is '...the most important industry following agriculture... This is carried on in all the divisions of the district. Fishermen of the province as well as Sinhalese from Negombo catch fish on the sea off the coast as well as in the lagoons. Much of this is transported,

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[154] Turner, L J. B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 88 and Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/204/1921.

[155] Administration Report, Eastern Province, Batticaloa District, CO 57 / 128/ 1895.

[156] Administration Report, Eastern Province, Batticaloa District, CO. 57 / 128/ 1895.

[157] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO 57/137/1898.

[158] Administration Report, Eastern Province, CO 57 / 201/ 1920; However, the oyster fishing near Trincomalee was chiefly carried out by Moormen from Kinniyai, see: Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 90

either packed in ice or salted to other parts of the Island.'[159] The migratory fishing seems have retarded the development of fish curing on a stronger footing.

6.3.4 Fishing and Fish Curing Methods

As might be expected, the native fishing, either freshwater or sea, employed the traditional methods. 'From time immemorial the large net ordinarily and exclusively used was known as *ma-del*...'[160] 'To catch large fish, hooks and lines, deep sea nets, and stake nets are employed.'[161]

At times, new methods emerged within the fishing communities themselves, but most of the fishing community members were not prepared to welcome the innovations in a friendly manner. '...Some fifteen years ago...some enterprising individual invented a large net made of hempen twine, called it a `*nul-dela*' denied that its use was subject to the foregoing custom, and claimed a right to fish when and where he liked. This has led to great heart burning, quarrels, breaches of the peace, and much litigation. There have been several district court cases the decisions in which were in favour of the free exercise of the right of fishing by all commerce. The movement has not however spread very much, as there are now only four such *nul-dels*.'[162] The dispute seems to have had some reasonable background in fears for the sustainability of the industry which has become an international issue only in the recent past. '...It is alleged in the *nul-del* the meshes are so small, that young as well as full grown fish are caught, and that this is detrimental to the general well-being of the fishery. The objection seems to me a very good one, and does not apply to the *ma-del*, which is made of coir, and the meshes of which are necessarily much larger, whether well-founded or not, however, it is one believed in by the very great majority of the fishermen interested in the dispute...'[163] Modern technology was denied to the fishing industry even when the British administration in the island was being wound up. The marine fisheries were carried on in a comparatively primitive manner by the local fishermen.[164] The antiquated methods

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[159] Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/204/1921.
[160] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[161] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p.51.
[162] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[163] Administration Reports, Matara District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[164] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 88.

employed could never succeed in making Ceylon self-supporting.[165] 'The Ceylon fisherman produce less than one-half of the requirements of the Island, and over Rs.12,000,000 are spent annually outside the country to meet those requirements. The "catching power" of the individual fisherman is inadequate ...'[166] Hardly any fresh sea fish reached the interior consumer prior to transport development under the British, so that the average consumer in those areas generally had to be satisfied with salted dry fish. Thus the '... outrigger canoes and catamarans and the fishing nets and lines at present in use were evolved to deal with the dried fish industry...'[167]

Fish Curing: Fish curing was confined to making either dried fish or pickled fish.[168] The former was more important than the latter. The method used for fish drying was universal in the island. 'The large fish are cut up and salted and exposed to the sun for five or six days; small fish are only exposed to the sun for two or three days. They are then sold to traders, who export them to Kalpitiya, Colombo, Kurunegala, Kandy and other places.' [169] Fish drying seems not to have been done by hygienic methods. 'Large quantities of fish are dried, salted, and dispatched to the interior; the process is, however, carried out in the most imperfect manner, and the product, consequently, in many cases utterly unfit for consumption, is without doubt a frequent cause of illness among those who partake of it.'[170] On some occasions middlemen gave support to small producers in the process. 'Fish curing in the province is encouraged. Salt are provided at reduced rates. Four companies, by name S.T. Fernando, C.P. Fernando, Meera Muhaiyatin and A.E. Byrde are engaged in this process ...' [171] However, advanced fish processing was not adopted during the period. 'I have not yet succeeded in inducing someone to try the tinning process. Perhaps the want of experience and knowledge is the chief difficulty, but this could easily be overcome by engaging the services of a trained curare for a short time until local men picked up the work.'[172]

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[165] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Report of the Government Marine Biologist for the year 1919 and 1920, CO. 57 / 201/ 1920.
[166] Administration Report, Report of Marine Biology, CO: 57 / 232/ 1931.
[167] Administration Report, Report of Marine Biology, CO: 57 / 232/ 1931.
[168] Turner, L. J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 88.
[169] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO. 57/63/1874.
[170] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', pp 50-51
[171] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO 57/137/1898
[172] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.

The modern roads and communications transformed the fish consumption patterns in the island. New towns and estates and some parts of the interior began to consume most of the fresh fish which were easily available to those areas. 'As usual, a very large quantity of fish was caught off the sea-coast and in the lagoons and back waters much of it was sent up by rail for sale in the central province.'[173] 'The towns and villages along the coast obtain a fair supply of fish, but very little of this reaches the inland villages. The consumption of meat is confined practically to the towns and estates, the ordinary villager making salt fish supply its place.[174] 'Fish has been plentiful, and is now being sent away by rail, in addition to what is carried inland for sale of the commercial markets.'[175] 'A large quantity of fish is caught and most of them are sent to up country, - Kandy, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya...'[176] As a result of the new consumption patterns, fish curing was gradually confined to the areas where access to the market for fresh fish was restricted or only to the occasions on which excess fish were caught. 'As might be presumed, a large number of persons are engaged in catching and in curing fish.'[177] 'Abundance of fish caught along the sea-coast, which is of excellent quality and sold cheaply. A small quantity is salted and carried into the interior.'[178] 'The fisheries were very successful, and a large quantity was salted and exported by the Sinhalese traders.'[179] 'On the coast, of course, fish is obtainable by all, and there is a considerable trade with the interior in dry fish, most of which is sold in Kurunegala and other bazaars, and the rest bartered in rural places for grain.'[180] As a consequence of increased fresh fish consumption, the dried fish industry began to decline. It '...is now almost extinct... The cured fish industry was formerly an important and flourishing industry in Ceylon, but with the advent of rapid transport facilities, the demand for fresh fish has increased to such an extent that no surplus cures, with the result that this industry except in remote district, has almost died out.'[181] The railway was the major mode of transport for the dispatch of fresh fish from the producing areas to the consuming centres.[182]

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[173] Administration Report, Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[174] Administration Reports - vol. 1, Western Province, CO: 57/157/1904.
[175] Administration Report, Eastern Province, Batticaloa District, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[176] Administration Reports - vol. I, Southern Province, CO: 57/161/1905.
[177] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p. 50.
[178] Administration Report, Southern Province, Hambantota District, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[179] Administration Report, Eastern Province, Trincomalee District, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[180] Administration Report, North-Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[181] Administration Report, Report of Marine Biology, CO: 57 / 232/ 1931.
[182] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 88.

Middlemen: Fishing was mostly carried out on a small scale by individual fishermen. The distribution of fresh fish and fish products was in the hands of middlemen; they effectively deprived fishermen as well as consumers of their wellbeing. The '... fishing industry is controlled to a large extent by contractors and wealthy traders and the plight of the poor fisherman is just about as it could be.'[183] 'We annually import something like rupees worth of dried fish, and by time it reaches the interior, this is only obtainable by the villagers at a comparatively high figure and is therefore looked upon by them more as a luxury than as being what it would be an article of daily consumption of the poorest...'[184] Fish prices seem to have been artificially controlled by the middlemen to the extent of discouraging both fish production and consumption. The fish prices between coastal city and the up country were more or less the same. The '...prices are high in Galle, ordinary consumers face difficulties. But the profit mainly goes to middlemen with not much difference in price between up country and Galle.'[185] In addition, there were occasions on which fish prices fluctuated through natural causes and this eventually affected both the consumer and the small producers. 'The value of the fishing fluctuates very much, some years being much more productive than others. It is said that fish are most abundant when the season has had its fair share of rain. In the last year the fishing was very bad.'[186] This might have had a link with the movement of the ocean currents, which bring rain as well as fish.

6.3.5 Government Policy

The British followed a policy similar to that of their predecessors in regard to fishing in the island.[187] 'From the salt monopoly and other restrictions in the Island, the fishermen of the continent are enabled to come over and to carry on the fisheries of the northern coast of Ceylon with greater advantage than the natives of the Island.'[188] Referring to a petition made to the collector of Colombo by the fisherman of Negombo, Pieris says; 'That ever since the surrender of the Island to the English Government the petitioners continued to pay certain duties on fish caught by them, viz., the

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[183] Administration Report, Report of Marine Biology, CO: 57 / 232/ 1931.
[184] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/105/1888.
[185] Administration Reports – vol. I, Southern Province, CO: 57/161/1905.
[186] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/63/1874.
[187] Pieris, Edmund. 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p. 481.
[188] Report 2, 31 Jan. 1832 Colebrooke; Quoted in Pieris, Edmund. 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p. 62.

renters, *accommodessan* and auctioneer's fees, whereby the petitioners have suffered much loss and inconvenience. The people ... who exercise other trades on land with greater ease have only to a tax of 1/30th to Government and the tax is recorded once or twice a year, but the petitioners who with much difficulty catch fish in the sea have to pay a tax of 1/5th and 1/6th on the same and that tax is recovered daily from them, thereby the petitioners are prevented from using the fish caught by them for any purpose, they require and subject to the restrictions of the renters. The headmen of other communities receive salaries from Government, but those of the petitioners are paid by them out of the fish caught and they have likewise to pay the fee of the auctioneer, with which circumstances, though the petitioners have not troubled Government, they have suffered considerable loss and much inconvenience, and had Government only levied 1/10th from the petitioners all this time they would not have been reduced to such poverty.'[189] The British administration in Ceylon had experimented with different types of fishing licensing systems especially after 1820 and each experiment caused a loss to the revenue and to the fishing industry.[190] The controversial fish tax was abolished by the Ceylon Government in *The Ceylon Government Gazette* No. 2,089 of 11th January, 1840.[191] Even when the tax was removed, the fishing community failed to develop any confidence in Colonial policy. 'Since the tax upon fish was removed, the trade in this article has very much diminished, and the boatmen are most anxious that the duty should again be levied. This may appear paradoxical, but I speak positively; all the chief fishers here having on one occasion expressed their opinions in my presence, and this under circumstances which makes me feel confident that such is the real state of feeling among them.'[192]

Salt was the ultimate ingredient for fish curing as practised in the island. The high salt prices due to the government monopoly not only caused hardship to the ordinary salt consumer, but also hindered the progress of a profitable fish curing industry along the coastal belt.[193] 'Looking at the question from the imperial point of view, there can be no doubt that the Colonial Governments will sooner or later be called upon to develop their

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[189] A Petition Presented by the People of Negombo to the Collector of Colombo, on the 26th October, 1832, Quoted in Pieris, Edmund 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', pp 63-64

[190] Pieris, Edmund 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p 64

[191] ibid , p 66

[192] Brodie, A O Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p 51

[193] Samaraweera, Vijaya 'Economic and Social Development under the British', pp 57-58

fishery resources in the interest of the empire. At the present it is ludicrous to think of Ceylon becoming an exporter of fish food.'[194] The government's main purpose was to get as much revenue as possible from the pearl fisheries rather than to make ways and means of developing the fish industry. 'In the case of Ceylon fisheries, it is difficult to obtain a true perspective of the relative importance of the different marine products. The pearl fisheries have overshadowed everything else, so that one is led to regard the food fisheries as having minor importance ... the mean annual revenue from pearl fisheries during the last century was only about Rs.200,000, that is about 3 per cent of the annual value of imported fish goods.'[195] No sufficient scientific research had been carried out for the development of industry. 'Until 1902, with one or two minor exceptions, no oceanographic research had been carried out in Ceylon waters.'[196] In 1908 the director of the Colombo museum was appointed as the marine biologist in addition to his duties at the museum. 'Since I wrote my last Administration Report in 1916,' records the government marine biologist, 'the Industries Commission has made a thorough investigation of the position of the fisheries of Ceylon, and its interim report has recommended (1) that the fisheries are in serious need of the development along modern lines, and (2) that a Development of Fisheries should be established to deal with the question.'[197]

6.3.6 Imports of Fish Products

There were sufficient fish in Ceylon's waters to feed a population many times greater than that of Ceylon.[198] Cured fish was universally used throughout the Island, being an indispensable and most wholesome ingredient in the preparation of the staple food of the people.[199] Like most other foodstuffs, fish products were also imported into the island in large quantities during the period under our investigation. 'Notwithstanding the abundance of salt and fish to be procured on the coast of Ceylon, salted fish is annually imported into the Island for consumption ... Should it be found practicable to relieve the natives in the manner which has been suggested, I

[194] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Report of the Government Marine Biologist for the year 1919 and 1920, CO: 57 / 201/ 1920.
[195] ibid.
[196] ibid
[197] ibid
[198] ibid.
[199] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO: 57/62/1873.

anticipate that they will be able not only to cure fish for the consumption for the Island, but that it will also become an article of considerable export.'[200] The growing population, increasing per capita income and the popularisation of consumption appear to have increased the total and per capita import of dried fish products over time.

TABLE No. III
PER CAPITA FISH IMPORTS
(lbs. per year)

Year	: 1880-82	1890-92	1900-02	1911-12
Dried fish(all varieties)	: 3.7	6.8	8.6	9.1

Source Meegama, S. A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 110

TABLE No. IV
EXPENDITURE ON IMPORTS OF FISH PRODUCTS

year	*cured fish including Maldives fish*	*tinned fish*	*fish manure*	*fish oil*
	Rs.	*Rs.*	*Rs.*	*Rs.*
1910	4249117	86637	607186	2066
1911	4339008	135177	1077073	948
1912	4228690	149636	757113	5507
1913	4467725	166661	1167687	1213
1914	3679338	152078	267756	2433
1915	4327500	147437	223990	1845
1916	4428770	184468	713808	3733
1917	4121258	80345	502959	2100
1918	4463125	62386	1067381	840
1919	3849420	79956	1357273	4635
1920	4508568	230147	1338411	2275

Source Administration Report, Report of the Director of Government Marine Biologist for the year 1919 and 1920, CO 57 / 201/ 1920

The country produced a sufficient quantity of salt to meet domestic needs, yet salt was being imported in the form of dried fish. 'As regards the conception of salt in Ceylon, it is important to note that considerable quantities are introduced every year into the colony in the shape of cured fish, which forms

[200] Pieris, Edmund 'The Fish Tax in Ceylon', p 66

a large item in the table of colonial imports In 1873 the quantity of fish so imported into Colombo and Galle (not including other ports) for home consumption, was no less than 11,093,117 lbs , being upward of five lbs a year for each person - man, woman and child in the Island This matter is one that attracts little attention, but it is, I think, deserving of note, as telling upon the sale of salt It is much to be wished that the curing of fish was more commonly resorted to by the inhabitants of the maritime districts of Ceylon, as large profits would certainly be realized from it Fish is abundant everywhere along the coast, and curing ought not to be a difficult art to learn '[201] A little attention was paid by local producers, but it was insufficient ' The salting and drying of fish for food has been attracting notice of late years, but no great advance seems to have been made in this industry Large quantities of salt and dried fish are, however annually imported, and form a great addition to the food supply of the people '[202]

The administrative officer of the Hambantota district had shown a keen interest in the necessity of fish curing in Ceylon The major reason for this extraordinary disposition was that the district had all the qualifications - abundance of fish, salt, the dry and sunny climate - for the industry 'I would again endeavor to invite attention to the desirableness of introducing among the fisherman of Ceylon, a numerous, robust, and intelligent body of men, the art of curing and drying fish after the Maldivian fashion The sale and profits would be enormous as a brisk demand exists for it all over Ceylon, in the inland districts especially The quantity of cured fish imported into Ceylon - an island, be it remarked, whose waters teem with excellent fish, and having abundance of cheap salt of the pure quality - is upwards to *twelve millions of pounds every year* part, at any rate, of the capital embarked in and released from the flourishing branch of trade should occur to the inhabitants themselves '[203] In the following year, a premium was offered to anyone who ventured to engage in the industry

'As the enterprise is really matter of national concern, I do not see an impropriety in an offer of a premium of 2,000 rupees to any man willing to embark capital in the undertaking, and to provide well cured wholesome fish in quantities sufficient to show that he means business on a large scale, and is prepared to carry on the work continuously Properly cured fish would, there can be no question, command an immediate sale It seems every way to be regretted that a pursuit in which the fisherman of Ceylon, a numerous, robust, and intelligent body of men, are so well qualified to take part, and one

[201] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO 57/62/1873
[202] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/101/1887
[203] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO 57/63/1874

certain, it will conduct, to yield enormous profits, should be altogether lost to the country. The capital spent on the importation of the 12,000,000 lbs. of cured fish brought from abroad must be very great.'[204] All these were private initiatives taken by the regional administration officials. The importance of fish industries in the colonies, as part of imperial policy, was recognized only in the second decade of the 20th century.'Though potentially of great value, our fisheries cannot be regarded as possessing great economic importance at the present time, but there is every reason to believe that, given wise directive control and a broad minded policy, they will developed into an industry for considerable economic importance. Lord Milner recommends that the colonies "direct attention to the possible establishment or extension of fishing industries for export." Far from being in the happy position of an export country, we are at present dependent on foreign fish products to the extent of about Rs. .6,000,000 annually.'[205]

6.3.7 Summary

It may be safely concluded that Ceylon's fishing resources were several times bigger than her domestic requirements, and fish was one of the important items of the native's diet. Yet, the country's fisheries failed to keep pace with the increasing demand during the period. Freshwater fishing was confined to the settlements where freshwater fish were procured. No substantial initiative was taken to expand this sector through the renovation of old irrigation tanks.

Sea fishing was principally confined to the traditional fishing caste and Roman Catholic people living in the coastal areas. The Muslim people paid little attention to the industry, especially on the east coast where fish were abundant. The technology employed was essentially traditional. Even more enterprising fishermen who initiated new methods had difficulty in breaking the tradition. The role of middlemen, the fish tax and salt monopoly were equally disruptive to the industry.

Fish consumption patterns changed considerably during the period. Both fresh and cured fish consumption increased. The former seems to have been met locally by reducing the fish stock which was used for fish curing rather than increasing the catching capacity. As a result, the fish curing industry declined over time. However, by supplying fresh fish to towns and

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[204] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO: 57/66/1875.

[205] Administration Report, Report of the Director of Report of the Government Marine Biologist for the year 1919 and 1920, CO: 57 / 201/ 1920.

plantations, the traditional fishing industry formed a link between the modern and traditional sectors.

The increased demand for cured fish was virtually met from foreign sources. The import of cured fish goes back beyond the arrival of Europeans, although under British rule, per capita and total imports increased to a higher level than ever before. The development of communications and transport, increasing income, decline of local fish curing and the vanishing of game were the important contributory factors to this increase. In brief, the island's fishing industry failed to absorb the pressure created by changing consumption and thereby make its fair contribution to economic progress.

6.4 Dairy Products: *wasting resources*

6.4.1 General remarks

Two kinds of animals - buffaloes and (horned) cattle – existed on the island before the introduction of foreign varieties in later times. Native buffaloes were used for ploughing paddy fields and treading out the grain, and considerable numbers were also slaughtered for food.[206] It was not unusual for the milk of this animal to be used to make a sort of yoghurt called curd or dikiri. With reference to domestic cattle, cows were used for milking and bullocks as draught animals. Buffaloes '...are sluggish animals, are possessed of more physical strength than the common cattle, but are slow-paced and soon sicken and die if they have not frequent opportunities of immersing themselves in water. They are used in farming, and are also commonly employed in carts, a practice which, I believe, is not general throughout the Island.'[207] The horned cattle were invariably referred to as black cattle or simply cattle.[208] Cattle were used for draught purposes, for their milk and for slaughter.[209] They became the main source of meat supply with the popularization of beef consumption. 'In this district all agricultural operations are carried on by means of buffaloes; black cattle are only bred or,

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[206]Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 96.

[207] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p. 52; On some occasions buffaloes are referred to as 'water buffaloes.' This may be due to their special attraction to water.

[208]Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/51/1870 and Administration Reports, Mullaittivu District, CO: 57/105/1888.

[209]Turner, L. J. B.*Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 96.

to speak more correctly, are allowed to breed for sale.'[210] Since ancient times the island seems to have had a great number of cattle. 'Besides buffaloes...a great many other horned cattle are bred in this district.'[211] Nevertheless, dairy products had not been developed and spread to the extent of being an easily available consumer article.

6.4.2 Consumption

As in the pre-British periods, dairy products were not widely consumed among the average Ceylonese (**see chapter 4: *dairy products***). Nevertheless, there was presumably some regional variation. 'The food of Tamils of the Trincomalee district consists largely of milk under normal circumstances. The pasturage available, however, becoming yearly more and more inadequate, and some means should be adopted to increase the supply of milk and curds.'[212] The presence of cattle diseases sometimes ruined the peasant's stock as well as his complementary source of food. The native is '...deprived also of one, and perhaps the greatest, of his few luxuries, the curd milk of the buffalo, which for six months in the year forms the only relish to his morning meal of hard and tasteless "Kurakkan roti" and which must be replaced by a less wholesome condiment of chilies and other herbs.'[213]

In many instances, the easily available nutritious food resources had not been utilised by natives. A number of accounts written during the period testify that the consumption of diary products was at a bare minimum among the natives. '...dairies are unknown, milk and butter are rarities, and scarcely any benefit is derived from the existence of cows, buffaloes, or sheep. ...'[214] 'Milk and butter are not used by the villagers as articles of diet, and cannot therefore, readily be obtained, even in small quantities and on special occasions, outside the limits of large towns.'[215] '...unfortunately the Sinhalese villager does not utilise the milk of the numerous cattle which are reared in every village of the province. The milk of the buffalo cow, which is exceedingly rich, is made into curd ("dikiri") and eaten with rice by many of the higher classes, but the neglect of milk and its produce by the

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[210] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO 57/51/1870
[211] Lewis, R E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p 49
[212] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO 57/108/1889
[213] Administration Reports, Nuwarakalaviya District, CO 57/57/1872
[214] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 53
[215] Administration Report, Western Province, CO 57 / 128/ 1895

ordinary Sinhalese villager is almost universal.'[216] 'People don't use sufficiently the milk of abundant cattle.'[217] 'Although cows are very numerous, especially in the Vanni, the people make no use of milk, which they regard in the light of medicine. It is unfortunate that so useful and nourishing a food, which is readily obtainable, is not utilised. There would be probably far fewer cases of parangi in the Vanni and other parts of the Province , if the villager could be induced to bring up his children on a milk diet.'[218] The economic and social changes brought about during the period had not created incentives for local dairy production. 'Milk is procurable, but is not a marketable commodity except in the town. The villagers themselves, for the most part, make but little use of the valuable food supply which their numerous cattle would yield in abundance did they care to take it. There are a large number of dairies in the outskirts of Colombo from which much of the milk consumed in the municipality is supplied.'[219] Even after political independence, milk consumption was not popular among the average Ceylonese.[220] 'The habit of milk-drinking is almost everywhere completely absent, except perhaps, among children who, either in their own homes or through the Government Milk Feeding Centres, get some milk as part of their daily diet.'[221]

6.4.3 Imports

The importation of dairy products began during the colonial period. It seems that imports in the early periods were used to satisfy the demand of high-income urban consumers and later were extended to the better-off consumers in the countryside. On special occasions even the poorer people must have tasted the flavour of these imported articles. 'Bombay tinned butter made from buffalo milk finds a ready market in the Colony, and this fact indicates that butter could be produced locally at a profit if Indian buffaloes were utilised for its production.'[222] 'In this colony, native consumption of frozen butter is said to be increasing as is the total

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[216] Administration Reports, North-Central Province (report says it is a quotation from the administration report for the year 1888, by Mr. Levers) CO: 57/147/1901.
[217] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/143/1900.
[218] Administration Reports, North-Western Province, CO: 57/147/1901.
[219] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/170/1907.
[220] Wijesekere, N. D. *The People of Ceylon*, p. 114.
[221] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, Ceylon Sessional Papers, 1951, p. 78.
[222] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon - 1919. C.O. 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

consumption. ... Australian cheese is not regarded highly in India or Ceylon, and we are of the opinion that it would be better to concentrate upon the expansion of Kraft cheese which is well liked. ... At Christmas time Edam cheese is imported into Ceylon in considerable quantities, even the native consuming it.'[223]

The consumption of milk powder has its roots in the British period and it has been the most important single dairy product to be imported into island in the post-independence period. '... health visitors faced a difficult situation for, not only had they to prevent the consumption of cheap skimmed milks which were being dumped on the Ceylon market but they also had to offer an alternative to the poorer families who could not afford to buy anything better.'[224] Traditionally, breast feeding was the major or perhaps sole source of food for Ceylonese infants. This seems to have changed to imported powdered milk first in urban areas and later in the countryside. 'The poor mothers by reason of their own physical condition cannot breast feed their infants long enough to tide over the critical period of an infant's life, and are therefore driven to feed them either on the cheap imported skimmed milks (if they can afford to buy even this), or on rice cunji and other foods totally unsuitable for an infant.'[225] The free infant feeds provided by the local and central administration appear to have encouraged the consumption of similar imported items among the natives. 'Condensed and dried milks are becoming more and more important, as the efforts of governments and Municipalities to raise the physical well-being of the children take effect. In a number of large towns ante and post natal treatment, frequently accompanied by free milk to children up to certain age, is provided. Instructions to the mothers on the rearing of their children appears to have reached many of the larger villages as we saw condensed and powdered milk offered for sale and we were informed that it was used for babies.'[226] The popularisation of malted milk among the native has its roots in the British period. The following account was about the groceries in a big fishing village in the western province in 1930s. 'The goods

[223] Sanderson, R. F., Thomson, John and Lynch, S. F. *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation to India, Burma and Ceylon-October 1935-January 1936,* Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1936, pp. 90-91.

[224] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 155; makes reference to administrative Report of the Municipal Council of Colombo, 1923, p. 62, Colombo, 1924.

[225] Administrative Report of the Municipal Council of Colombo, 1923, p. 66, Colombo, 1924; quoted in Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 153.

[226] Sanderson, R. F., Thomson, John and Lynch, S. F. *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation to India, Burma and Ceylon-October 1935-January 1936,* p. 91.

exposed to sale were rice, curry stuffs and dried fish. In one was noticed a few tins of malted milk.'[227] Malted milk is now universally accepted by the native as the most nutritious and effective beverage for the sick, convalescent, weak or elderly people. The strong advertising campaign carried out by the multinationals in the late British period seems to have contributed to this consumer pattern among natives. By 1922 '...dairy produce, tine and frozen meat, and tinned milk are imported to an average annual value of about Rs.1,550,000.'[228] This was in addition to the live animals imported for meat, draught and breeding purposes.

6.4.4 Low Yield

Colonial writings suggest that productivity in the dairy sector of the island was lower than in many other countries. A number of contributory factors to this backwardness can be gleaned out from the same sources. One was weak stock as a result of lack of pasture. '...the miserably feeble condition of cattle owing to want of pasture land ...The high lands are, it may be said, almost entirely planted, and more or less without herbage; while the low lands afford pasturage of the coarsest and poorest kind, and that only during the intervals of short duration between the periods of cultivation.'[229] In some cases, owners had kept cattle as an idle asset, in others insufficient attention was paid to caring for the cattle. 'Of the larger cattle, it may, I think, with safety be said that, like guns, one-half at least are purchased, not from an expectation that they will yield any direct profit to the owner, but simply as means of investing money; thus they frequently form the portions of the marriage gifts among the natives...'[230] 'The numbers of cattle do not increase rapidly, little attention is paid to them, their food is only what the uncultivated hills supply...I have no doubt that were the natives more energetic, the number of cattle might soon be double. They are extremely afraid of misfortunes occurring to their cattle through the agency of evil spirits.'[231] 'The number of native cattle in the Colony is very considerable, when the circumstances under which they are maintained and the inadequate attention that is given to their feeding are taken into account.

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[227] ibid , p. 43.

[228] Turner, L J. B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 96.

[229] Administration Report, Western Province, CO. 57/128/1895; Traditionally, the post-harvest paddy field is used to feed cattle until the next cultivation begins

[230] Brodie, A O Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, pp 52-53

[231] Lewis, R E 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p 49

The capacity of these cattle, when well-nourished, for draught purposes is good, and with selection doubtless could be improved ... In the villages there are large numbers of native cattle that are allowed to roam about untended and uncared for. In order to deal with these cases it is highly desirable that communal pastures should be created.'[232] Stall feeding was not known to the natives.[233] There were some occasions on which natives fed their animals themselves. For example, in Puttalam and Chilaw districts, *poonac*, the residue left from extracting oil from copra or dried coconut kernels, was used to feed poultry and cattle.[234]

According to reports; the typical Ceylonese cattle could not provide a large quantity of milk. 'For milking purposes the native cattle leave much to be desired, and considerable improvement could be effected by crossing, selection and better feeding ... for the purpose of dairies milch buffaloes and cows are required. Ceylon buffaloes are not satisfactory milk producers as some of the Indian strains.'[235] 'The improvement of the breed of the cattle is one of the great wants of the province. The numbers of cattle are very large, but no attempt has been made by selection or otherwise to improve the class, which is deteriorating in size and in milk production. A native cow in full milk will frequently not give more than a quarter of a bottle a day.'[236] The low milk yield was likely to affect the rearing of healthy calves. 'In the majority of the dairies in Colombo calf starvation is common, and no improvement in the quality of dairy stock is to be expected so long as this neglect in the feeding of calves is continued. At the present time the loss arising from this practice of calf-starvation is considerable.'[237] Turner ascribes the inadequacy of local stock to the scanty food supply, indifference of owners, the geographical position of the island and the failure to cultivate pasture.[238] The low productivity problem would have been overcome; at least in the short run, by utilising the enormous number of cattle. But the majority of Ceylonese were little interested in the consumption of dairy products.

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[232] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon-1919 C O.57/ 198/1918/1919/1920

[233] Administration Report, Western Province, CO 57 / 128/ 1895

[234] Brodie, A. O Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p 40

[235] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon - 1919 C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920.

[236] Administration Reports, North-Western Province, CO· 57/147/1901

[237] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into Cattle Breeding in Ceylon-1919 C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920

[238] Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 96

6.4.5 Diseases

Cattle diseases frequently visited during the period and killed a large number of local cattle. The two commonest diseases were rinderpest and murrain. The treatments given seem to have been inadequate and inconsistent with the sheer scale of the losses. 'During the past years the amount of stock has been greatly diminished due to the disease called 'murrain'. In many places three fourths of the animals have died. The charm alone has been applied hitherto and the consequent loss to the country is very great.'[239] 'The occurrence of cattle disease, especially rinderpest, and the unscientific manner in which cattle were reared usually kept the mortality among these animals unusually high.'[240] 'Murrain has prevailed ... 2,329 buffaloes and 1,222 black cattle died of it during the year. We have some 3,000 buffaloes and 3,000 black cattle still left.'[241]

'The year 1909 was marked by an event for the Hambantota District which has had a most disastrous and far reaching effect. An outbreak of rinderpest, which began in February and still continued in some villages of West Giruwa Pattu and in Tissamaharama at the end of the year, caused the death of approximately 11,000 domestic buffaloes and 3.000 other cattle... if the disease had swept off only the undersized and useless stray village cattle it would have been by no means an unmixed fortune, but it was the weakest and most useless cattle that it seemed to spare, while the greatest mortality was among the cart bulls and the buffaloes. In a district where for the most part ploughing is unknown and the cultivation of fields depends entirely upon the supply of the buffaloes, and in the town of Hambantota where a large number of inhabitants depends for their living solely upon carting, the loss is incalculable.'[242] The following table provides a good indication of the disastrous consequences of cattle diseases in this period.

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[239] Brodie, A O Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, p 53.

[240] Wickremeratne, L A 'The Development of Transportation in Ceylon c 1800-1947', *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, Volume Three, The University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p. 306, makes reference to Tennet, Sir James Emerson, *Ceylon* II, p 180 ff

[241] Administration Reports, Mullaittivu District, CO· 57/105/1888.

[242] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO. 57/176/1909

TABLE No. V
CATTLE DISEASES IN NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT

Name of Division	*Number of cattle in each Division*	*Number of deaths (first six months)*
Uda Hewaheta	3,270	815
Walapane	1,989	400
Kotmale	3,127	180
Total	8,386	1,395

Source: Administration Reports, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/51/1870.

The principal source of cattle diseases was the import of live animals for food and draught purposes into the plantations. The diseases were passed on to cattle along the roads on which bullock carts traveled to the estates, and later to the rest of cattle, as virtually all the local cattle roamed freely. 'During the first quarter murrain brought over by imported cattle.'[243] 'Walapané and Uda Hewaheta will never, I am afraid, be free from the annual visitation of this plague whilst the coffee planters of Uda Pussellawa and Maturata have no better means of transporting their produce than by tavalam composed of wretched half-staved animals, exposed to all kinds of weather, and carrying with them every disease that cattle are heir to. Kotmale, on the contrary, which is not visited by tavalams, and has richer pasturage, is seldom attacked, and is now entirely free from it.'[244]

6.4.6 Cattle Pasture

Cattle were in a good condition and largely resisted diseases when suitable pasturage was available. 'Cattle are numerous, healthy and comparatively fat; the wide, grassy plains in Mágama pattu and the banks of the Walawé river afford pasturage of a quality rare in the low-country.' [245] In the wet zone, however, pasture lands had been turned into plantations, making it difficult to feed the native's cattle. The '... condition of cattle is said to

[243] Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/86/1882.
[244] *Rate Mahatmaya of Uda Hewaheta*; quoted in Administration Reports, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO: 57/51/1870.
[245] Administration Report, Southern Province, Hambantota District, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.

deteriorate yearly. This may be due to the gradually lessening areas of pasturage, owing to the spread of plantation.'[246] The central, hilly part of island had the best meadows for feeding cattle and they were encroached on by the estates, making difficulties for the native cattle owners. 'Although Kotmale has, comparatively speaking, such superior grazing grounds, still the inhabitants complain bitterly of being deprived of the Lindula and Agara Patanas, where they were formerly in the habit of driving up their buffaloes, and leaving them for months till they were required again for ploughing. As soon as the planters appeared, their buffaloes were shot down, and they were perforce obliged to abandon these rich pasturage lands. I don't see how this could have well been avoided, but I think Government, in consideration, should encourage and promote artificial cultivation of grass, as suggested by the cattle commission.'[247] On some occasions chena cultivation was helpful in turning forests into grassland for the cattle. 'The chief use of chena is for cultivation, but they are also used as grazing lands, and the cattle of adjoining village or of passing tavalams are allowed to graze on them, much the same as they would be allowed to graze on a common in England...'[248] Abundant land was available for cattle farming in the drier districts, but grass was mostly confined to the rainy season. 'Most of the grasses in the district die in the dry season, from June to August, and endeavors have been made, but without success, to introduce a more hardly kind.'[249]

6.4.7 Summary

The majority of people were not used to consuming dairy products as part of their routine diet, so they paid only scant attention to making use of this valuable resource at their disposal. However, the consumption pattern of dairy products changed during the period. Imported powdered milk, as a new consumer article, was added to the consumer basket. A number of dairy products were added in the same manner to the list of imports. The country had a quite large number of cattle and buffaloes. The decline in pasture lands, cattle diseases, slaughtering of animals and cattle stealing adversely affected the industry. The traditional native cattle keeping was not up to modern standards.

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[246] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO. 57/62/1873.
[247] Administration Reports, Central Province, Nuwara Eliya District, CO. 57/51/1870.
[248] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/54/1871
[249] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/54/1871.

6.5 Wheat Flour: *new starchy foods*

6.5.1 General Remarks

The story of wheat-based products consumption in the island began during the colonial periods; over time it has become the near perfect substitute for rice, kurakkan and many varieties of yams and grains which were traditionally consumed in the island. Bread became the widely and routinely consumed wheat-based article among the natives.

6.5.2 Wheat-Based Products

In the early days of British rule, bread consumption was mainly confined to Colombo and some larger urban areas. However, the bread culture gradually spread to the small urban areas. 'During the year a bakery was opened at Mullaittivu and a second bakery at Vavuniya by an enterprising Sinhalese boutique-keeper. This is the first time that a bakery has been established in this district, though an attempt was made a few years ago which failed. The bread made is very fair and infinitely preferable to the squashed mess delivered by coach from Anuradhapura or Jaffna, with which one formerly had to be content.'[250] At the end of the 19th century, bread was becoming an important food article in many parts of the island, including some remote places. 'The food supply consists mainly of rice, fine grain, fish (fresh and cured), cassava in large quantities and other garden products: bread is also largely used.'[251] Wheat was becoming supplementary to rice in some localities. 'Four Graverts and Akmimane Mudaliyar reports about wheat and wheat flour as one of the supplementary to rice consumption.'[252] The salient feature in the early days of bread culture in the island was that it was mainly confined to the high income families. The poorer classes consumed it on special occasions. However, the periodical rice crises forced the poor to substitute bread for rice. 'In addition to the restrictions imposed by the Government of India on the export of rice from India, it was found necessary to limit the export of certain other foodstuffs, one of the most important from the point of view of Ceylon being flour, for which Ceylon was almost entirely dependent on India. In February the Ceylon Government was informed that the export of flour to Ceylon would

[250] Administration Reports - vol. 1, Mullaitive District, CO: 57/157/1904.
[251] Administration Report, North Western Province, CO: 57 / 128/ 1895.
[252] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.

be limited to 500 tons a month ...'[253] 'In normal times flour is imported mainly from Bombay, but the supply from this source had been restricted to 500 ton per month since 1918. As, however, before the rice crisis the consumption of bread was confined mainly to the richer classes, this had proved sufficient, but soon as scarcity of rice became pronounced and the price rose, the labouring class began to buy bread stuffs as a substitute ... by the end of the year we were getting 2,000 tons a month from Bombay and Calcutta ... This supply was supplemented by occasion consignments of Australian flour ..'[254] 'Since then imports of flour strided '240,524 cwt. of flour were imported in 1922, this demand being met from India and Australia.'[255] In the 1930s Sanderson *et al* could report that 'Ceylon is an important market for flour. . The Ceylonese are consuming more flour and gradually giving up rice. The bulk of the flour goes to bakeries...'[256] The second world war was another important turning point of wheat flour consumption in the island. At a certain point of time the value of imported flour surpassed the value of imported rice, the star of life in the island. '...Wheat flour, introduced as a substitute for rice during the world war II, has passed rice in value as an imported food.'[257] When the island was experiencing the dawn of political independence wheat had consolidated its position in the native's food intake. 'Every family has three meals during the day...in many homes the early "morning tea" may be very little more than that If rice remains from the night before, this will be eaten, and in season ... some yams or manioc for the breakfast. Bread is often used as a morning filler. Popular items, distinctively associated with "morning tea," are various sorts of rice flour cakes eaten with plantains or coconut sambal.'[258] The diversion to wheat flour finally ended with most of the local substitutes turning into inferior goods in the independence period. The '... status of roots and tubers (with the exception of potatoes) in the present food consumption pattern is that of inferior substitute to rice and wheat

[253] Report on food control in- 1919 C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920, As a result of a subsequent request from the Government of Ceylon, the Indian flour supply was increased to 200 tons per month in August and September The deficit was later bridged through importation from Australia

[254] Administration Reports, Report of the Principal Collector of Customs for 1919, CO 57/200/1919, The failure of the 1918 monsoon in India compelled the Indian government either partially or completely in every province to adopt a policy of restriction of food exports and countries dependent on Indian imports suffered.

[255] Whitaker, C F 'Trade and Commerce', p 84

[256] Sanderson, R F , Thomson, John and Lynch, S F *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation to India, Burma and Ceylon-October 1935-January 1936,* p 89

[257] Peebles, Patrick *Sri Lanka A Hand Book of Historical Statistics*, p 197

[258] Ryan, Bryce *Sinhalese Village*, University of Miami Press, Florida, 1958, p 38

flour. Demand for them is consequently, largely affected by price availability of rice and wheat flour. ... All roots and tubers excluding potatoes, as well as cassava as an individual commodity, had a clear negative relationship with income, implying that they are inferior goods.'[259]

Wheat-based sweets, especially biscuits, successfully competed with rice-based traditional articles during the period. 'In all the European articles of diet there have been large increases as compared with 1873 beef and pork, biscuits, butter, ham and bacon, oil monsters, wheat flour....'[260] '...Germany exported to Ceylon Rs. 84,000 worth of biscuits, which command a sale almost entirely on account of the boxes in which they are packed, which are of a size suitable for a betel box or a native woman's work box and ornamented with attractive if goodly designs.'[261] The native's attraction to the biscuit containers seems to have made him a frequent consumer. 'Biscuits are very popular in India, Ceylon and Burma, both amongst Europeans and natives who can afford them. There are factories in Ceylon and India manufacturing mostly cheap biscuits, but also a limited quantity of better quality. ... Biscuits are consumed in about equal proportion by Europeans and the people of the country. In Burma and Ceylon villagers who can afford to do so buy biscuits for special occasions... We are of the opinion that there is very definite market in India, Burma and Ceylon for Australian biscuits... the market will extend to Burmese and Ceylonese villagers for special occasions.'[262] The '... large shop keepers in Colombo ... stated that when travelling the Ceylonese will commonly purchase such things as biscuits and a tin of jam which he could not afford for general household use.'[263] This was a complete transformation when compared with the traditional consumption habits. The biscuits before the first world war came mainly from United Kingdom and Germany and after the war Germany was replaced by Australia.[264]

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[259] Samaratunga, P. A 'An Economic Appraisal of the Position of Tropical Roots and Tubers in Human Nutrition in Sri Lanka', *Marga*, Vol 9, No 1, 1987, pp 51, 62

[260] Administration Reports, Memorandum on the Custom Revenue Returns etc, for 1874 , CO 57/63/1874

[261] Administration Reports - vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO 57/157/1904

[262] Sanderson, R F , Thomson, John and Lynch, S F *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation to India, Burma and Ceylon-October 1935-January 1936,* p 88.

[263] ibid , p 45

[264] Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 32.

6.5.3 Summary

As a result of the diversion of consumption from local products to wheat flour substitutes; the production of the former declined over time. Kurakkan and other fine grains and many kinds of yams were gradually replaced by the wheat-based products. Wheat flour began to take the place of rice flour in the preparation of many kinds of sweets and foods. Bread or wheat-based foods became a popular source of breakfast, which was uncommon in the country in earlier times.

6.6 Sugar consumption: *coarse sugar vs. cane sugar*

6.6.1 General Remarks

Traditionally, jaggery or coarse sugar was consumed in the country and the excess production was exported to India. Under British rule consumption was diverted from jaggery to imported cane sugar. Some attempts were made to produce sugar locally, but the results were not promising. In the early stages, cane sugar was a commodity of high class society and later on it became a mass consumer article. In this respect the story is quite similar to the European experience.

6.6.2 Cane Sugar

Referring to sugar cane in the island Bertolacci says '... the natives make no other use of those canes, than to chew...'[265] Ferguson held a similar opinion; he says 'Sugar-cane is largely grown in native gardens for use as a vegetable, the cane being sold in the bazaars and the pith eaten as the stalk of a cabbage would be.'[266] It seems that sugar cane cultivation was not a successful venture under the British. 'The climate and soil proved unsuitable for sugar however the canes produced an inferior and inadequate yield of sugar. Though one or two plantations struggled on for a while, the

[265] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 138

[266] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883 The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p 51 Similar opinions were held by Turner, although he reports that sugar cane was grown in small areas along the Gin-ganga of the southern province for what he calls crude, raw jaggery sugar See Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p 92

rest folded up between 1883-1846.'[267] 'The cultivation of sugar-cane was attempted twice, upon an enlarged scale, on the same spot, near Caltura; and both times has occasioned great loss to those who ventured upon it; and therefore was abandoned.'[268] Bertolacci says that he saw the sugar-canes growing luxuriantly other parts of the country where the soil was very agreeable to the plant.[269] The inquisitive observation and far-sighted suggestion made in the following sentence proves Bertolacci's brilliance in analysing economic phenomena on the basis of the contemporary sugar production experience in the island. 'It would likewise difficult to rear and manufacture sugar in Ceylon that should be sold cheaper than what is imported there from Bengal. There sugar-cane is cultivated by natives in small plantations and the sugar is manufactured in little quantities in their huts at very trifling expense. Ceylon could ensure great prospect of success by inducing the natives to cultivate the cane in their little gardens, and to manufacture sugar in their huts with the simplest commonest utensils than to venture upon any more expensive plan.'[270] India itself was not producing sufficient sugar for its own requirements and imported it from Java, so that the sugar imported from India to Kalpitiya harbour in Ceylon possibly originated from Java.[271]

The following account suggests that the industry was gaining momentum in the island, but it was nothing more than an explanation of an isolated case. 'The cultivation of sugar-cane and the manufacture of sugar are well established and steadily extending up the valley of the Gin-ganga. The principal plantation is at Baddegama, where Mr. Bowman has introduced some of the latest improvements in sugar machinery, and has established works on a scale and system which render a visit to them highly interesting and instructive. Higher up the river, an enterprising Sinhalese of Nagoda shows that considerable success and profit are obtainable by a judicious combination of English and native methods. He works with a system engine and English machinery to crush his cane, but in other respects he uses the old methods; If they are somewhat rough, they are inexpensive and his profits are

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[267] Roberts, Michael. and Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', p. 93; authors acknowledge the cooperation received from K. M. de Silva in writing the sections on sugar and cotton.

[268] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p. 137

[269] ibid., p. 137.

[270] ibid., pp. 138-139.

[271] Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, p. makes reference to Government Agent-North Western Province, 1927, Colombo, 1928, P. F. 25 and p. 28 and *Review of the trade of India in 1913-14* ,Calcutta, 1914, p. 1.

doubtless large. There are other smaller works for the manufacture of sugar, and cane is grown at many places four miles up the river.'[272]

The country's principal source of supply in the early twentieth century was, Java while some sugar came through Hong Kong.[273] 'The imports of sugar have made wonderful strides during the last ten years, increasing three-fold. The imports of last year were unprecedented ...'[274] Officially the colonial administration accepted the importance of sugar industry when the situation turned sour. 'The Colony imports all its requirements of sugar. Trials with small mills for the production sugar from sugar cane for local consumption should be made. The cultivation of sugar can be a peasant's industry ... The former sugar areas have now been planted with rubber ...'[275] 'There is an ample market for sugar in the Colony...'[276]

6.6.3 Jaggery

'Previous to the growth of modern trade cane was but little used in Ceylon, and jaggery took its place.'[277] '... [J]aggery (a kind of sugar made from the juice of the coconut tree, the palmyra tree, and nippers), is made in very large quantities, and sold for a mere trifle (one-forth or one-sixth of the price of the cheapest sugar), and generally used by the natives of Ceylon; besides a considerable supply, which is exported to the continent of India. Therefore, to obtain a market, to any extent, among the natives, is hopeless; and the consumption of the best class of Europeans and Burgers (for the lowest of them use jaggery in preference) will not afford a sufficient sale to make it a matter of importance to larger plantation.'[278] Both coconut and palmyra trees have many uses; so that they are called universal trees. But the principal use of kittul tree is drawing juice either to drink or to make jaggery. '...the chief use of the Kittul tree is to draw the toddy from it. ...Toddy when freshly drawn from the tree is sweet to the taste, and

[272] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO· 57/79/1879.

[273] Administration Reports, Report of the Principal Collector of Customs for 1919, CO 57/200/1919 and Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p 32

[274] Governor Sir J West Ridgewood's address to the Legislative Council of Ceylon during the Session of 1901, CO 57/147/1901

[275] Stockdale, F A , Director of Agriculture, 'Proposal for co-ordination and extension of Agricultural services ', C O 57 198/1918/1919/1920

[276] Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p 92.

[277] Cook, Elsie K, *Ceylon Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p 182

[278] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 138

possesses all the properties of cane juice; after being boiled and the watery particles evaporated from it several times, it crystallises into a coarse sugar, capable of being refined into a superior article.'[279] Of all the varieties, the kittul jaggery was considered superior. 'The *Kitul* (*Caryota urens*) grows fairly towards the interior, but is not cultivated; the jaggery obtained from it is considered superior to all others.'[280] The Kitul or Jaggery palm was almost invariably found about the villages and it had never been planted, but sown by seeds dispersed by animals.[281] This applied universally to the Kutul growing regions of the country. Jaggery making had been an important cottage industry providing self-employment to a considerable number of people in many provinces. The following account describes palmyra jaggery making in the northern province.'...manufacture of jaggery appears to be rather an important industry of the poorer classes. It is estimated that about 15,000 cents are manufactured in the peninsula about 5,000 cents, are annually exported to India. The jaggery appears to be exported chiefly to French India where, I am informed, it is refined and sold as crystallized sugar.'[282] The colonial administration has taken initiatives to encourage the jaggery production on some occasions. 'It was with a view to encouraging the manufacture of jaggery that the drawing of the sweet toddy for the purpose of manufacturing jaggery was exempted from the operations the Excise Ordinance in two district referred to above [Jaffna and Matara]. Sweet toddy tapers in these districts are now not required to go to headmen to get a licence, nor are they required their trees marked. This Department has also taken certain precautions to protect the genuine jaggery manufacturer and so encourage the jaggery industry. But the some time there is no doubt that a very large number of sweet toddy tapers take advantage of this to do a large amount of illicit trade.'[283] Palmyra jaggery was principally produced in the northern provinces where the tree thrives; the coconut jaggery was made in the wet plains and kitul jaggery in the central hilly provinces. The consumer had the opportunity to select a variety according to his preference. 'Palmyra jaggery is imported from Jaffna, and coconut and kitul jaggery, which are preferred, from Matale.'[284]

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[279] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 48.
[280] Brodie, A. O. Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province, pp. 46-48.
[281] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 48.
[282] Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/79/1879.
[283] Administration Reports, Report of the excise commissioner for 1919, CO. 57/200.
[284] Administration Reports, North- Central Province, CO: 57/147/1901.

6.6.4 Summary

Traditionally, coarse sugar was consumed by the natives. The local production exceeded the local requirements and the excess was exported. Consumption was diverted from local coarse sugar to imported cane sugar during the British period. Coarse sugar production declined, exports ceased and the industry lost its foothold. Cane sugar was mixed with wheat flour for the preparation of many kinds of sweets instead of the traditional rice flour and coarse sugar mixture. Over time, jaggery was relegated from an ordinary consumer article to an indigenous medicinal ingredient or for use only on special occasions.

6.7 Beverages and Intoxicants: *demolishing the foundation*

6.7. 1 General remarks

Liquor consumption dates back to beyond the Europeans' involvement in the island's affairs (**see chapter 4: *beverages***). Nevertheless, it was highly restricted and largely unknown and, above all, it was not disruptive to the smooth functioning of the society. Drunkenness was obviously considered as a social taboo; neither liquor production nor consumption had been streamlined for the sake of public revenue. Nevertheless, the centuries-old tradition turned into thin air under the Europeans; more specially under the British.

6.7. 2 Toddy

The kitul or jaggery palm (*caryota ureus)* is found around every Kandyan's hut.[285] A sweet flavoured juice called *telijja or* sweet toddy was drawn from this tree; it was used either to make coarse sugar or intoxicating beverages. The term 'toddy' is sometimes used in colonial writings to refer both to fermented and unfermented forms of the juice. 'After standing twenty-four hours toddy begins to ferment, and acquires an intoxicate quality...'[286] The other two kinds of palm tree from which toddy was made in the island were palmyra and coconut. The former was in abundance in

[285] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883: The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p. 48.
[286] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 48.

the northern districts while the latter grew in the southern wet zone plains during the period under review.[287]

Toddy was one of the chief articles of food of the people living on Delft island.[288] 'During the early part of the year and up to June, large quantities of palmyra toddy were drawn and consumed as food, more especially by the people of the Vadamarachchi division...'[289] '... all the inhabitants in the toddy season (January to September) are drunk with toddy - men, women, and children - and they thrive on it. ...the women of Delft have much more energy in them than men; they practically manage all the trade and litigation of the island...'[290] The report further says 'All the people are fattened with toddy, and are quite drunk from morning till night: men, women, and children without exception.'[291] In many instances, much of the toddy might have been consumed in unfermented form, especially by women and children.

There were taverns licensed to sell fermented toddy throughout the island under the British. As with other intoxicants, the liberal toddy sale policy was one of the important revenue sources of the colonial government as well as a cause of public outcry. 'I might further remark, in this connection, that experience seems to show that, while the toddy tavern presents an irresponsible temptation to numbers of the poorer classes, if that tavern be removed, the same people appear to get on just as well without drink at all, while the benefits to their wives and children of the money, which is otherwise squandered daily at the tavern, can hardly be over-estimated.'[292] In

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[287] It is maintained that the coconut cultivation in Jaffna was systematically started in the 1840s and the toddy was extensively drawn from the coconut palm tree all the year around see· Katiresu, S *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula and a Souvenir of the Opening of the Railway to the North,* p 37 However, when compared to the southern coconut growing provinces the production and consumption of coconut toddy here were negligible

[288] Administration Reports - vol 1, Northern Province, CO 57/157/1904, A number of islands in Palk's Bay were renamed after Dutch cities during their administration In addition to Delft (Neduntive) other names given were Haarlem (Naynativu), Leyden (Mandetivu), Middelburg (Kunkudutivu) Amsterdam (Karativu) and Rotterdam (Anelativu) See Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon,* p 40 and Williams, Harry *Ceylon Pearl of the East,* p 186

[289] Administration reports, Northern Province, Jaffna, CO 57/73/1877 (footnotes), more toddy was drawn than usual to consume during the year, owing to a food shortage as a result of prolonged draught in certain parts of the island and southern India, but the reports say the dry grain harvest, including kurakkan, was remarkably fine in the Jaffna district

[290] Administration Reports - vol 1, Northern Province, CO 57/157/1904

[291] Administration Reports - vol 1, Northern Province, CO 57/157/1904

[292] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO· 57/204/1921

addition to the legal toddy, there were illegal toddy drawings. Much toddy '...is clandestinely consumed. ... because the arrack renters of the District have the power of levying a fine upon those who use it - a power too frequently and vexatiously exercised.'[293] The illicit toddy had become an irritating question to the administration. 'The difficult question of illicit drawing and sale of toddy is now under consideration by the Government as it undoubtedly deserves early treatment. In the vicinity of estates the sale is a very serious evil, the cause of incessant trouble to headman and prosecutions of villages, while it demoralises the coolies on the estates.'[294] While some were eager to point out the benefits rather than the harm caused to the people from legal toddy tapping. 'Toddy drawing from palmyra and coconut tree is another industry...which is rather ignored by those who are in favour of the elimination of alcohol liquor. The closing of so many taverns in the district means the throwing out of the employment of a numerous body of men.'[295]

6.7.3 Arrack

The arrack or coconut whisky was principally distilled from the juice drawn from the coconut tree. 'Distilleries were allowed between Panadura and Dondara head (inclusive) a belt of coastline of about four or five miles in breadth. Maximum price of arrack gallon may be sold has been fixed by the government at Rs. 4.48. However the prices are always higher than that. If a gallon of arrack is sold by glasses it would be sold for somewhere between Rs. 6 and Rs. 11 according to the district. The prices in distilleries areas are comparatively low.(in these areas illegal arrack is available. Part of the production is leaked to the customers illegally through a number of means). Central provinces are the price tops the highest - the cooly labourer being the renter's best customer. The average price of a gallon is Rs. 4.50 and Rs. 5.25.'[296] The Negombo AGA reported that, in addition to many legal taverns, there had been illegal arrack sales; and complaints were being

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[293] Lewis, R E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 48.
[294] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO. 57/147/1901.
[295] Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO 57/204/1921.
[296] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, Clifton Press, Colombo, 1896, p. 28, There is no clue about the author, British Library Catalogue No 07073.f.2(4). The anonymous writer claims that he looked at the arrack question impartially since he was not a party to the problem - govt official, renter or taxpayer He maintains that the account is based on the first hand information he received

lodged on the matter.[297] At times, even if at these higher rates, the consumer had been deprived of the genuine product. 'It is also to be observed that the arrack sold in the taverns of this district is not the pure spirit, but adulterated with water, and doctored, as I believe, with vitriol, turpentine and other equally abominable and noxious.'[298] It was well known that the arrack was not only diluted, but was also reinforced with tobacco juice.[299] Whatever the quality, arrack had become the national drink of the island during the period. 'Arrack is the national drink of the Sinhalese. Even if the distillation is stopped, imported drink will take its place.'[300]

It was argued that the arrack had some definite benefits over imported intoxicating beverages. 'Arrack is a wholesome drink. I have been told that it is a far more wholesome drink than many of the chief whiskies in the market Not only on this score is the consumption of arrack better than that of any other drink but also on this - that it is a home product.'[301] A considerable number of people were employed in the arrack industry. 'Arrack distillation was largely an occupation of small producers who, lacking capital, relied on advances from merchants and middlemen'[302] The following employment figures refer to only two districts in the southern province 'There are in Galle District thirty-three arrack distilleries and five in Matara Districts Including the toddy-drawers there are about forty men employed in each distillery. The industry therefore gives employment to about 1,320 men.'[303] In addition one could think of other employment opportunities created in the distribution process. And it was also one of the principal sources of revenue of the colonial government.[304] Compared to many other imported consumer articles during the period, arrack could be considered as a dynamic and rapidly expanding industry in the island. It was one of the export articles as well, the main foreign market was neighbouring India. 'The most important article of foreign trade in Early British times, apart from Cinnamon, was Arrack, which is the liquor distilled from the fermented juice, called toddy, drawn from the unexpanded flower spathes of the coconut palms. .. The principal foreign market for Ceylon arracks

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[297] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO· 57/112/1890
[298] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO 57/54/1871
[299] Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO 57/51/1870 (footnotes)
[300] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, p 40
[301] ibid , pp 40-41
[302] de Silva, Colvin R The Arrack Trade of Ceylon 1796-1833, *Ceylon Literary Register (Third Series)*, vol I, no ii, November, 1931, p 483 made reference to Bertolacci p 149
[303] Administration Reports - vol I, Southern Province, CO 57/161/1905
[304] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, p 1

was Madras, Bombay, and the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, where it was required for the consumption of the Army and Navy as well as of the indigenous inhabitants.'[305] Nevertheless, the importance of arrack as an export article declined over time, while local consumption increased. '...the export is not to be compared to the large local consumption, which unfortunately increases with the increasing wealth of the people. The British are blamed for regulating and protecting the arrack and liquor traffic, but the consumption was pretty general before the British came to Ceylon. It may be a question whether taverns have not been too widely multiplied, and whether we should not take a leaf out of the Dutch policy in Java, where the consumption of intoxicating liquor among natives is very rigidly restricted.'[306] Contrary to this practice, in many cases in Ceylon, arrack was first distributed free among the natives to popularise it; after this the sale soared very high and the colonial administration connived in this endeavour to enlarge its revenue.[307]

'There had been general concern in Ceylon over the increase in drunkenness during the latter quarter of the 19th century, but very little had been done to combat this problem. In 1893, a newspaper attributed the causes of serious crime partly "to the unlimited multiplication of arrack taverns and liquor shops solely in the interest of revenue. Another journal claimed that 'with the increase of civilisation and western ideas, the native mind looks upon the use of spirituous liquors as a sine qua non of respectability."'[308] 'The consumption of arrack continues to increase, and with it of course the receipts for licenses, constituents of an income which, however legitimate, cannot by its growth provoke other than feelings of regret in the minds of all who have an intimate knowledge of village life.'[309] In 1872, the Governor by introducing an ordinance to control the sale of liquor, remarks 'English rule has given to Ceylon many blessings but we have at the same time extended a curse throughout Island, namely drunkenness. Some years ago a drunken Kandyan would have been a disgrace in the eyes of his fellows. Now the occurrence is so common the disgrace has passed away. Drunkenness is exceeding into villages where it

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[305] de Silva, Colvin R. The Arrack Trade of Ceylon 1796-1833, pp. 481-82.

[306] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883: The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p. 46.

[307] Perera, Fr. S. G. *History of Ceylon: The British Period & After 1796-1956*, (rev. Fr. V. Perniola)The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Colombo, 1959, p.97.

[308] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, pp. 43-44; makes references to 'Editorial' in *Ceylon Independent*, 13 may 1893 and *Ceylon Native Opinion*, 8 Nov. 1898.

[309] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/66/1875.

was before unheard of.'[310] After five years in office, the same Governor makes these remarks on his achievements. 'I am confident you will give me credit for having done all that lay in my power, during my five years of Government, to suppress drunkenness. The large increase of arrack rents during these five years proves that the drinking of spirits does not diminish, but grows from year to year. This may be readily accounted for the influx of Indian labourers on public works, and the high wages paid to them throughout the country.'[311] Not only the ordinary people, but members of the law enforcement agencies had also become the victims of the anathema. 'Four constables were fined for being asleep or drunk on duty, and such like, in 1869, and the same number in 1870, and four have been dismissed...'[312]

Drunkenness was considered to be a widespread common vice. 'The vice most common at present amongst the native gentlemen is drunkenness, and this vice is spreading to a most alarming extent, even amongst the lower orders of the people. An attempt is now being made to introduce this "Temperance Association" and I believe in one of the village several people have taken the pledge. One man promised not to drink spirits, but said that he could not take the pledge, and when asked for the reason, replied that he could not resist a tumbler of porter when he went to Kandy! Interesting evidence of the spread of European civilization!'[313] The farming of taverns in villages encouraged drunkenness the among natives. 'I think that there can be no doubt that taverns should not be established in the villages. The chiefs attribute the increase of the number of drunkards to the proximity of taverns. The lazy in the villages stroll into the tavern when it is close at hand, while they would hesitate to walk two miles to the high road for a drink of arrack. It is not only in the villages that drunkenness is increasing, but also among the Tamils on the estates, and complaints on the head by employers are not at all infrequent.'[314] 'There are thousands of men who would not walk a half a mile for a drink of arrack, but who would drink if they found the tavern at their very doors. There are thousands more who would walk a half a mile for a arrack, but would not walk a whole mile, still less two or three miles, for the

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[310] Speech of Sir William Gregory appeared in W. Digby, *Forty Years in the Crown Colony*, vol. II, Madras, 1879, p. 118; quoted in Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p. 43 (footnotes).

[311] Governor W. H. Gregory's Address at the Closing Session of the Legislative Council, 7th May, 1877, CO 57/70/1876-1877.

[312] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, Batticaloa, CO: 57/51/1870.

[313] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/54/1871.

[314] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/54/1871.

sake of drinks.'[315] The influential newspapers of the day were instrumental in the temperance moment. 'The increasing consumption of intoxicating liquors in this island is a very serious danger to which we earnestly wish to draw the attention of all true patriots.'[316]

6.7. 4 Liquor, Crimes and Gambling

The liberal policies on the sale of arrack and other intoxicants were highly explosive issues during the day. Only a few were in favour of the British policies in this regard; but influential persons and most of the provincial and district administration officials of the colonial government were against the liquor and drug policy as we pointed out earlier. It was considered to be closely connected with the crimes on the Island.[317] Yet, these allegations did not go unheeded 'Is it true, as it is averted, that the arrack is the chief source of crime? I have my doubts. No man yet committed murder, became a gambler or a highway man, or a house-breaker, because he drank arrack. The motives which induce those crimes are one thing, the arrack which nerved the hand or sustained the faltering courage is another.'[318] Nevertheless, the real facts came to light against these intellectual speculations.

It was not uncommon to highlight on many occasions that there was a relationship between drunkenness and serious crimes. 'From the time I came to this district I have been deeply interested in the matter of crime which has carried me the great possible anxiety I took upon it, as a blot on the English Administration of Ceylon that more have not been taken to aim at the root of the evil - arrack. I say without hesitation that a very large proportion of the crime of the district is due to the extraordinary facilities given to the people to squander their money, their health, even their very lives, on drink.'[319] Murder

[315] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO: 57/112/1890.

[316] *The Buddhist* 16 August 1889; quoted in Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p. 67.

[317] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, Clifton Press, Colombo, 1896, p. 1.

[318] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, p. 40.

[319] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO: 57/112/1890; The interior of the island was considered as the least affected part of the European influences where crimes and vices were virtually absent. The following account is about the north central province, the centre of the ancient civilisation in the island. The people of the Nuwarakalawiya are the most gentle I have had the fortune to meet. It is true they quarrel a good deal, but these squabbles are generally of the most trifling kind; parties after exhausting their list of abusive terms, pull each other's hairs, then shriek and run away from each other, and so the matter ceases. Serious assaults, robberies, murders, are

was the most serious crime committed and the capital sentence was the highest punishment meted out for the crime. The following table provides a good indication of the serious crimes committed over a few years during the period.

TABLE No VI
CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS AND EXECUTION

Year	*Sentenced to death*	*Hanged*
1895	26	22
1896	37	25
1897	40	20
1898	28	19
1899	27	21
1900	51	32
1901	47	37
1902	43	30
1903	36	23
1904	32	22

Source: Administration Reports-vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO: 57/157/1904.

The same report points out the link between crimes committed and the effect of liquor. 'The offenders were is all these cases men who had not been previously convicted of any crime. The murders were committed in the heat of passion or after drinking bouts and quarrels in gambling dens. It is seldom that a murder is deliberately committed with the intention of theft or robbery. The death penalty seems to have little different effect.'[320]

Gambling had been a close companion of the drunkenness and gone hand-in-hand with many other vices. 'Side by side with the drinking of arrack come the vices of gambling and cock fighting, often have I heard the dangers of these vices expatiated on by well-to-do and respectable natives, but never till I came to this district did I form the slightest idea of the fearful extent of which they are carried on in the maritime districts.'[321] 'Almost every village of the district has a cock-pit, every of group of villages has its gambling den, and near to each is a tavern or a place of illicit sale of arrack. Drink leads to

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all but unknown, and during three years I have not had to punish one native of the district for pilfering.' See: Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p. 161.

[320] Administration Reports - vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO: 57/157/1904.

[321] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO: 57/112/1890.

gambling, gambling to crime of a more serious nature, and if the records of the court could be examined, I have no doubt that it would be found that nine-tenths of the serious crimes were committed within a mile from a tavern, and quite one-half arose from the desperation caused by losses at gambling.'[322] The people from the most westernized maritime provinces appear to have migrated to the interior with some vices. 'Low-country Sinhalese and boutique-keepers from Panadure, Galle and Matara, are the great frequenters of the court. Gambling of some kind either with law or with dice - is their hobby and they seem equally pleased whether they stand in the position of complainant or in that of dependant.'[323]

Ananda Coomarswamy summarizes the causes of crimes and violence in the native society, giving priority to liquor and narcotics. 'I propose now to say a few words about the personal character of the real and unspoiled Sinhalese villager; and the evidence on this point is so strong, that it cannot be overlooked. If therefore it can now be shown that violence or crime are to any marked degree prevalent in the villages, it would appear that this must be due to some flaw in the "civilising" influences brought to bear upon them in one way or another during the last century. Such flaws it would be but too easy to indicate; they include the growth of an opium and liquor traffic, the encouragement of litigation, education which ignores the traditional religion and established sanctions for morality...destruction of order of society and decay of the hereditary peasant proprietor.'[324] A considerable number of native families with a fairly strong economic background seem to have been ruined by the drunkenness. Brodie makes the following reference to the *Mukkuvar* people in Chilaw and Puttalam. 'These people are Christian Tamils and are found, I believe, solely along the coast and the north of Chilaw. ... At one time they formed a very influential body and possessed large tracts of land; but being almost without exception addicted to drinking, they have now sunk very much in the social scale.'[325] Similar evidence comes from many other parts of the island. 'Arrack has proved the ruin of many a good Kandyan family in the district, and it is steadily adding to its victims.'[326] Governor North was much perturbed by the effects, among the inhabitants and soldiery, of the excessive consumption of arrack

[322] Administration Reports, Negombo District, CO: 57/112/1890.
[323] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/57/1872.
[324] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. The Village Community and Modern Progress, *The Ceylon National Review*, vol. II, no. 7, August, 1908, pp. 252-253. see also p. 218 (footnotes).
[325] Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p. 58.
[326] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/66/1875.

induced by such low rates.[327] 'This massive increase in the sale of arrack and toddy became possible due to the monetisation that had taken place in the rural areas. Its effect was deleterious on a demoralised peasantry, so much so that early in the 20th century, the Temperance Movement was formed to combat the menace. The fate of the Australian aboriginals after the introduction of intoxicating liquor was the most tragic example of this trade in alcohol in precapitalist society.'[328]

6.7. 5 Foreign liquor

Besides the locally brewed spirits, a reasonable quantity of foreign spirits were imported and consumed annually. In the year 1877 '*Malt liquor* gives an increase in value of 123,369 rupees... spirits of all kinds a decrease of 12,332 rupees ... *Tobacco,* cigars and snuff shew an increase ... Wines of all sorts shew an increase ...'[329] 'The value of foreign liquor imported in 1894 was Rs. 1,377,993 and of opium Rs. 635,695, which totals Rs. 2,013,688. All this money has simply gone out of the island. The arrack rent in the year fetched Rs. 2, 576, 445 that about a fourth more. And all this money keeps circulating in the island alone.'[330] 'Spirits and cordial, nearly 6 3/4 lacs, show an increase of Rs.40,000 over last year, and more than a lac over 1899. These figures show clearly that any depression there may be has not extended to the urban population, the largest consumer of imported liquor.'[331] The three chief kinds of spirits cleared for consumption in the island in 1921 were; 'Brandy 20,509 proof gallons, Gin 45,387 proof gallons, Whisky 54,477 proof gallons. Whisky came almost exclusively from the United Kingdom and Brandy from France. Holland was responsible for a little more than three fourths of the Gin, while the United Kingdom supplied the remainder.'[332] As in the case of diluted arrack, the foreign liquor consumers had to be satisfied with an inferior stuff. 'Gin, or a drink called gin, is already competing with arrack even in such remote districts as Muppana. This imported stuff is not gin. It is a sort of methylated spirit largely mixed with turpentine and water.'[333]

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[327] De Silva, Colvin R. The Arrack Trade of Ceylon 1796-1833, p. 484.

[328] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and ...*, , pp. 49-50.

[329] Administration reports, Memorandum on the Customs Revenue Returns for 1877, CO:57/73/1877.

[330] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, p. 41.

[331] Governor Sir J. West Ridgewood's address to the Legislative Council of Ceylon during the Session of 1901, CO: 57/147/1901.

[332] Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', p. 84.

[333] *Arrack Farming in Ceylon*, p. 40; at times the term 'district' has been used to refer in

6.7. 6 Closure of Taverns

As a remedial measure to arrest the evil effects of liquor consumption; the colonial administration held a separate local opinion poll for each tavern to decide if it was to be closed or not. Only the taxpayers were eligible to caste their votes for the purpose. The policy, however, was not extended to all liquor shops. 'At present local opinion polls are restricted to arrack and toddy taverns, foreign liquor, beer and porter taverns, and to hotels, restaurants, rest houses, railway refreshment rooms but the governor has power to except specialised hotels.'[334] The closure of the selected liquor shops hardly reduced consumption the among natives. In such instances they shifted their consumption to alternative sources. This was the case in Jaffna. 'All taverns and premises licensed for sale of liquor were closed in 1926, but the craving for liquor was assuaged by wholesale importation of foreign liquor.'[335]

TABLE No VII
FOREIGN LIQUOR TO JAFFNA BY RAIL BETWEEN 1929-1931

Year	*Foreign liquor*(cases containing two gallons each)
1929	7,297 .
1931	7,889

Source Administration Report, Report of the Excise Department, CO 57 / 232/ 1931

These figures do not include foreign liquor transported by private persons by train or bus or by post.'[336] This was not a special case confined to Jaffna and it was the common trend in many other localities. 'The North-Central Province is in its size the classic example of dry area. In this province there used to be 3 arrack taverns, and then its annual consumption was about 10,000 gallons. Since the closure of these taverns, sales at Galgamuwa and Dambulla taverns, which stand in adjoining provinces, over 30 miles distance from Anuradhapura have risen by 2,600 gallons per year; and sales of foreign liquor in Anuradhapura town have gone up by 4,690 gallons.'[337]

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colonial writings to small localities such as villages in addition to the official administrative units

[334] Administration Report, Report of the Excise Department, CO 57 / 232/ 1931

[335] ibid

[336] ibid

[337] Administration Report, Report of the Acting Excise Commissioner, CO 57 / 201/ 1920

'There used, similarly, to be 4 taverns in Veyangoda Range, which sold 2,900 gallons in 1919. Of these 4, Pasyala arrack tavern alone remains, and sales at Pasyala have risen, too, and I understand that basket women regularly convey a bottle or two from Colombo to this quarter.'[338] In many areas illicit traffic and smuggling of arrack increased to take the place of closed taverns. For example, Panadura, Mirigam, Kegalle; and the cases were not uncommon.[339]

6.7.7 Opium and Hashish

Two more important intoxicants which came into use among the natives under the British were opium and hashish. The latter is invariably referred as Indian hemp, bhang or ganja [340] Ganja had long been used by natives as an ingredient for indigenous medicine.[341] Opium had been used as a medicine in India and China for a thousand years or more without causing any problem and the smoking of opium had not begun until 1620. At first, opium was mixed with smoking tobacco, a practice learned from European traders [342] The native practitioners had also long used opium as a medicinal ingredient and in the later stages of British rule it was supplied only to registered practitioners [343] Opium either could be 'smoked' or 'eaten' and both methods were practised in Ceylon.[344]

In the maritime districts opium was available at the beginning of the 17th century under the Portuguese rule, although the quantity imported and consumed is not known and the Dutch, far from discouraging the use of this drug by the natives, continued its trade under their monopoly [345] There is no

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[338] ibid

[339] ibid

[340] Mary and Margaret W Leitch 'A visit to opium shops in Colombo, and the Neighbourhood, Let in Light ', To the editor , "Ceylon Observer", *The Use of Opium and Bhang Spreading in Ceylon, Especially in Colombo and the Need for Specially Restricting the Sale*, (Reprinted from Ceylon Observer) Ceylon Observer Office, Colombo, 1893, p 6

[341] Ferguson, Donald 'Opium in Ceylon', *Ceylon National Review*, vol ii, no 4, Ceylon Social Reform Society, 1907, p 59

[342] Roberts, John G *The Colonial Conquest in Asia*, p 32

[343] For example see Administration Reports, Colombo District-Western Province, CO· 57 /199 /1918 and Administration Reports, Kalutara District -Western Province, CO 57 /199 /1918

[344] Mary and Margaret W Leitch 'A visit to opium shops in Colombo', , P 6

[345] Ferguson, Donald 'Opium in Ceylon', , p 61, makes reference to the Proclamation of D Jeronimo de Azevedo, viceroy of India, on 22nd April, 1613 ("Arch Port -Or," vi , p

evidence that the indigenous used opium from time immemorial.[346] However, in the latter part of the 17th century Moors, in particular, in the hill country appear to have consumed opium.[347] Poppy cultivation was carried out on a trial basis in the early years of the British administration. This abortive experiment was carried out in the 1820s on the Wallewe river bank in Magampattoo.[348]

The Colombo municipality was the most important drug consuming center on the island. 'By the amending Opium ordinance No. 4 of 1876, which came into operation on 1st January, 1879, the Council (Municipality of Colombo) derived an increase of revenue under the head of "Opium Licenses" but advantage was taken of the increase thus afforded by a higher rate of fee, to reduce the number of licensed shops.'[349] There were '..four shops in Colombo, licensed both for the sale of the drug and for the smoking on the premises, and 39 other opium shops throughout the country, that 12, 457 pounds of opium were imported into this island last year, the amount consumed yearly having increased nearly 30 per cent in the last ten years, that from this traffic Government derives this year a total revenue from the scale of licences and from import duties of R 42,956 and costing consumers over R. 200,000 a year ...' [350]

The influence of opium and hashish had spread beyond the big cities to the highly remote settlements of the country. 'I regret to say that it has been necessary to bring Tangalle within the scope of the ordinance regulating the sale of opium and bang. These deleterious narcotics are consumed by many persons both at Hambantota and Tangalle. This year new and stringent conditions have been inserted in the licences...'[351] However, the soil and climatic conditions of the island were conducive to the ganja plant. 'Ganja grows in a wild state in many parts in the interior ... compressed ganja is also smuggled into the Island in large quantities from India. ...the ganja habit shows no tendency to decrease in spite of the number of cases

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951) , and a royal letter of King Philip dated 14th February, 1615 (Documents Remettidos da India" iii, p 20) and "Ceylon Lit Reg " iii 357.

[346] 'Opium and Bhang in Ceylon', Editorial "Ceylon Observer," 8th June 1893, "Ceylon Observer", *The Use of Opium and Bhang Spreading in Ceylon, Especially in Colombo and the Need for Specially Restricting the Sale*, (Reprinted from Ceylon Observer) Ceylon Observer Office, Colombo, 1893, P 10

[347] Ferguson, Donald 'Opium in Ceylon', *Ceylon National Review*, vol ii, no 4, Ceylon Social Reform Society, 1907, p 62

[348] Ferguson, Donald 'Opium in Ceylon', pp 63-64, quotes Bennett *Ceylon and its Capabilities*, 1843

[349] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/79/1879

[350] Mary and Margaret W Leitch 'A visit to opium shops in Colombo', p 4

[351] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO 57/62/1873

detected, and in spite of severe sentences passed on persons convicted of dealing in ganja.'[352]

The following is from a survey conducted by Mary and Margaret W. Leitch of the licensed opium and hashish shops within the Colombo municipal limits. First they interview the man in charge of the Slave Island opium shop.

Question: "How many come daily to buy opium to consume on the premises" ?
Answer: " From 50 to 60"
Question: "How many buy opium and take it home"
Answer: "200 or more daily"
Question: "What classes, nationalities come to buy"?
Answer: "All castes, classes and nationalities - Sinhalese, Tamils, Malays, Chinese, English, sailors, etc.,"
Question: "Is it sold to women?"
Answer: "Yes"
Question: "To small children"
Answer: "Yes, Children under ten years of age are not allowed to smoke it on the premises, but children of any age buy and take away."
Question: "How much do people who are regular purchasers spend a day on opium?"
Answer: "Some buy 6 cents' worth a day, some habitual consumers spend Rs.10 a month on opium."[353]

'... the opium seller speaking in a somewhat scornful manner assured us that they would be obliged to go on using it while life lasted, saying that a confirmed opium user could never break himself of this habit ...' [354] The opium consumption of an addicted person, as its inherent nature, increases over time; physical condition and wealth declines accordingly. 'As the habit grew up he would require more and more of the drug and spend more and more on the drug and spend more and more time in its consumption so that he would become more and more of a burden and anxiety to his relatives.'[355] The future generations were also at stake through the unregulated freedom of drug consumption. '... 'save the children' be the ruling desire of everyone who truly loves the people of this island, and who moved by the highest and most unselfish motives would seek to put this

[352] Administration Reports, Report of the Excise Commissioner for year 1918, CO: 57 /199 /1918.
[353] Mary and Margaret W. Leitch 'A visit to opium shops in Colombo', p. 2.
[354] ibid., p. 3.
[355] ibid., p. 3.

dangerous poison under the same restrictions as it is in Great Britain, America and other enlightened lands.'[356] The man who was interviewed by Mary and Margaret W. Leitch at Pettah Opium Shop replied '... I know men who are selling bit by bit all their property in order that they may buy opium; men are frequently committing theft in order that they may get money to buy opium.'[357] This Pettah shop had 1000 customers a day [358] Mary and Margaret W. Leitch visited a number of licensed hashish shops as part of their research.[359] 'Bhang is freely available in India and Ceylon. But not in England or America. In England no-one can get it without a medical prescription.'[360]

The'...sale of the drug in Colombo was entirely in the hands of "Jaffna Tamils" - apparently a set of relatives who have bought the licenses for the four shops established in this city and pay the Municipality for the same no less a sum R. 26,600 per annum... We find that there is no official record of any hemp or bhang coming in during the past two years, and yet we are assured, it is openly and freely sold. We have never heard of its being prepared from plants grown in the island.'[361]

TABLE No VIII
REVENUE FROM OPIUM-COLOMBO MUNICIPALITY

1889	for	1890	R. 14,008
1890	,,	1891	R. 19,600
1891	,,	1892	R. 20,800
1892	,,	1893	R. 26,600

Source Opium and Bhang , "Ceylon Observer" 10th, June, 1893, *The Use of Opium and Bhang Spreading in Ceylon, Especially in Colombo and the Need for Specially Restricting the Sale*, (Reprinted from Ceylon Observer) Ceylon Observer Office, Colombo, 1893

[356] ibid , pp 4-5
[357] ibid , p 5
[358] ibid , p 6
[359] ibid , p 6
[360] ibid , p 9
[361] 'Opium and Bhang in Ceylon', Editorial "Ceylon Observer," 8th June 1893, p.12

TABLE No IX
REVENUE DERIVED FROM THE LICENSES FOR THE SALE OF OPIUM AND BHANG IN 1892

Western Province	R. 1700
Central	" 400
South	" 100
North-Western	" 1300
North Central	" 100
Sabaragamuwa	" 300

Source Opium and Bhang , "Ceylon Observer" 10th, June, 1893, *The Use of Opium and Bhang Spreading in Ceylon, Especially in Colombo and the Need for Specially Restricting the Sale,* (Reprinted from Ceylon Observer) Ceylon Observer Office, Colombo, 1893.

The practice of the consumption of opium among natives has its roots during the British administration. '...there is no evidence that opium was used by the Sinhalese until after the British Government licensed opium shops in their midst - the first of these was opened in 1850 and the total importation in that year was only 850 lbs., which would all be required for the Malays (who used opium), for the hospitals and apothecaries. But by 1893, when there were over 30 shops, the imports rose to 13,000 lbs. And now it is from 18,000 to 20,000 lbs. With 68 shops '[362]

6.7.8 Summary

The consumption of all kinds of intoxicants increased during the period. As a result, the wealth of the ordinary masses, before being sufficiently accumulated along with monetization, was diverted to the colonial administration. At the early stage of economic growth, when the per capita income was low, expenditure on intoxicants took a higher percentage of household budget, so it certainly affected the current and future well-being of a family. It is reasonable to assume that the consumption of certain kinds of intoxicants had implications for the physical and mental condition of the population.

[362] Ferguson, [no initial or first name appeared] see in the postscript to Donald Ferguson 'Opium in Ceylon', *Ceylon National Review*, vol. ii, no 4, Ceylon Social Reform Society, 1907, p 66

7

Consumption of Non-Food Goods

In this chapter we examine the changes brought into the consumption of clothing, ornaments, furniture, household utensils, lighting materials, detergents, health and hygiene during the British administration. The heading 'cloth' has been given undue preference here over others, because of its historical importance to the island's economy and potential power at the early stages of economic growth.

7.1 Cloth: *from local to imported products*

7.1.1 General Remarks

The legends reveal that the cloth weaving in the island goes back beyond the arrival of first invaders from the Indian sub-continent. It is maintained that many varieties of cloth were woven in the past (**see Chapter 4: *Cloths, Attire and Ornaments***). Of all of them, cotton material appears to have been in first place. It was the cloth that was widely used from the common people to the nobles of the society. The warm and humid climatic conditions, low exertion required for production, simple technology and easy availability of the raw material would have stimulated the local cotton industry in the past. Cotton cultivation has been an integral part of the indigenous agriculture since time immemorial. The weaving of cloth was one of the most important traditional crafts in the society. It can be safely stated that a considerable number of natives were engaged in cotton cultivation, spinning, weaving and dyeing in the past. Some may have entirely been engaged in this trade for their livelihood, while others did it as a part-time job in addition to their dominant task of food production. The

story of clothes in the island seems to have been essentially the story of cotton.

7.1.2 Cotton Cultivation

In the earlier Sinhalese times cotton was grown in various parts of the country.[1] The natives generally produced small quantities of cotton either for their own clothes or to barter for other articles. The preferable climatic and soil conditions in many parts of the country would have encouraged cotton cultivation. '...Ceylon soil can produce the finest cotton. I have seen it in the highest perfection, both of the Bourbon and Brazil sort; and the Nankeen better than other. It grows luxuriantly in different soils, with little care being bestowed upon it ...'[2] Sirr wrote, '.. there is every just ground to believe, that it is capable of producing as fine a quality as any which has ever been grown...produce an article which can fairly compete with the slave-grown cotton of America.'[3] The most suitable environment for the cotton culture appears to have been in the drier parts of the island. For example it 'thrived well' in the northern Jaffna district.[4] A small harbor called Point Pedro in the Northern Jaffna peninsula was known in Tamil as *Parutti Turai,* or cotton port, due to the fact that great quantities of cotton were formerly exported from there.[5] In the drier North-Western districts of Chilaw and Puttalm cotton grew wild over the whole of the districts and was harvested in large quantities.[6] In addition, cotton was cultivated in the eastern dry district of Batticaloa and more widely in the southern district of Hambantota.[7] According to Turner, the most suitable area for cotton cultivation was Hambantota District and other preferred areas were Eastern Province, Uva, the Matale District of the Central, North-Central Province

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[1] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', In Plate Compiled *Ceylon Its History, People, Commerce, Industry and Resources* Plate Limited, Colombo, 1924, p 110

[2] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, pp 131-132

[3] Sirr, Henry Charles, *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol I, pp 162-163

[4] Samaraweera, Vijaya 'Economic and Social Development under the British', p 56

[5] Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon· A General Introduction*, p 257 and Katiresu, S *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula*, p 71

[6] Brodie,A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 49

[7] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 132

and the black cotton soil area in the Mannar District.[8] Cotton continued to be cultivated on large scale in Mannar into the early days of British rule.[9]

When cotton was cultivated in the drier districts, it seems to have been a mixed rather than a monoculture. 'Cotton is also grown in chénas, the seed being placed in the ground along with that of *kurakkan*, which grows faster, and is removed before the cotton has approached maturity.'[10] In Batticaloa native cotton was grown in conjunction with maize or Indian corn.[11] Like many other native trades, cotton growing was neither scientific, nor highly commercialized, as Europeans naturally preferred. The '...indolence and ignorance of the Ceylonese make them rear this plant, whenever they do, without preparing proper beds for it, or even breaking the ground through which the root must spread; it is indeed surprising how it flourishes, with such a total neglect of that assistance which is requisite from the hand of the husbandman.'[12] A number of attempts were made to place the cotton culture on a more scientific, commercial and large-scale footing during the British administration. For example, in order to promote export agriculture, export duties on certain commodities were removed in 1829 and cotton was one of them.[13] The colonial Department of Agriculture made experimental cotton cultivation to promote the crop.[14] Nevertheless, Ferguson says, between 1837 and 1846 it was conclusively proved that cotton culture did not pay on the island.[15] Whatever may have been the intellectual views on

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[8] Turner, L J B *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, H. R Cottle, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1922, p 92.

[9] Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon A General Introduction*, p 257

[10] Brodie, A. Oswald 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalawiya', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 146-147, making reference to certain memoranda written by his predecessor on cotton cultivation, stated that fourteen years ago the price of a bullock's load of cotton was 6s 8d Weavers were paid in either kurakkan or paddy He calculates the cost of cloth production and also refers to the second crop which was equal to the first crop, if the soil was good, see also Sirr, Henry Charles, *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol I, pp 162-163 and Corea, Gamini *The Instability of an Export Economy*, p 20 Corea holds in addition the chena cotton growing as a monoculture

[11] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol 1, p 163

[12] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 132

[13] Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p 123, makes reference to Mendis, G. C (ed) *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, vol 2, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1956, pp 276-280

[14] Stockdale, F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', in Boards of Scholars (eds), p 110

[15] Ferguson, A M *Ceylon in 1837-46*, Colombo, 1886, p 33, quoted in Roberts, Michael and Wickremeratne, L A 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', p 93

the subject, the colonial interest in Ceylon as a possible source of raw cotton supply to the British cotton industry did not die down easily. Even in 1861, attempts were being made to cultivate cotton in Badulla District to provide cotton for the Manchester cloth producers.[16] A cotton trial ground was maintained in Ambalantota until the 1920s.[17] There is no strong historical evidence to suggest that the island was exporting raw cotton to foreign countries in the past. In 1887, however, a small quantity of short-stapled cotton from the silk cotton or *kapok* tree (*Bombax malabaricum)* was exported to Australia and Europe to stuff chairs and mattresses.[18] By the 1920s it had been an export article for many years and the export value in 1922 stood roughly at £ 26,000.[19]

The importation of raw cheap cotton and cloth seems to have displaced the local cotton culture. The grower received intermittent respite only when the prices of imported cotton went up. 'Cotton cultivation owing to the high prices ruling for raw cotton, was encouraged during the year.'[20] If we ignore all the temporary stimuli, the cotton culture in the island as a whole was in a critical condition when the British administration was reaching to its end. 'In recent years', says Stockdale, 'the weaving industries have died out and only a very small number of cotton plants are to be found in villages.'[21] The beginning of this trend goes back to at least the middle of the 19th century. 'At present, the people seldom get more than 3s. for a load of cotton; this is attributed to the vast quantities of cloth now imported from India and England.'[22] A few natives, in the midst of the market fluctuations, had managed to maintain the cotton culture for a considerable period of time. They always grew a little cotton in certain districts.[23] The declining local cotton culture is not essentially attributable to the fact that cotton cultivation on a commercial basis was not possible in Ceylon. The

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[16] de Silva, S. B. D. The *Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 362.

[17] Stockdale, F. A, Petch, T and Macmillan, H. F. *The Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya, Ceylon: 1822-1922,* H. W. Cave & Co., Colombo, 1922, p. 64.

[18] Ferguson, John . *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, 1994, p. 56; this fiber is not used to make cloth.

[19] Stockdale, F. A. 'Ceylon Agriculture', in Boards of Scholars (eds.), p.109.

[20] Administration Reports, Report of the Director of Agriculture for the year 1918, CO: 57 /199 /1918.

[21] Stockdale F. A. 'Ceylon Agriculture', p. 110.

[22] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalawiya', pp. 146-147; makes reference to certain memoranda written by his predecessor on cotton cultivation, fourteen years ago, when the price of the bullock's load of cotton was 6s. 8d., Weavers were paid in either kurakkan or paddy.

[23] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883: The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p. 51.

director of agriculture said that cotton cultivation had been very much neglected in the Island.[24] There '...are large tracts of land in Ceylon which could grow satisfactory crops of cotton...The prospects before cotton as a peasant's industry are also promising in certain areas if organized distribution of seed and collection of cotton is undertaken by Government.'[25] The report on industrial development and policy was specific and enthusiastic about the spinning and weaving industry in Ceylon and urged the Department of Agriculture to study the problem of cotton cultivation.[26]

7.1.3 Local Cloth Weaving

In the earlier Sinhalese times, hand-woven cloth of great durability and excellent quality was made in the country.[27] In the hinterland where modern forces had little impact in the early days of British rule, the villager obtained his cloth as it would have been in the earlier times. 'If he [villager] wants a new cloth, he gives the cotton from his chéna, and also some grain by way of fee to a weaver, or else he barters the product of his field with some passing trader.'[28] It is reasonable to think that, in localities where the modern forces came into being earlier than elsewhere, the natives would have satisfied their clothing needs by way of the latter rather than the former.

As might be expected, the traditional spinning and weaving in the island was essentially done on simple technology and small-scale. The loom in use in the island was of the most primitive and rudest construction and resembled that used in many parts of India.[29] In the early British period, small-scale cloth production units appear to have existed in many parts of the island.[30] The average size of the production unit did not change even in the first half of the twentieth century. Hand spinning and weaving was still

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[24] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol I, p 162.

[25] Stockdale, F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', in Boards of Scholars (eds), p 110.

[26] *Report on Industrial Development and Policy,* Sessional Paper xv, 1946, pp. 10-11, quoted in Oliver, Henry M 'The Industrialisation of Ceylon Opinions-Policies 1916-1951', *The Ceylon Economist*, vol iii, no 3 Nov 1956, pp. 179-180

[27] Stockdale F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', p 110

[28] Brodie, A Oswald 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakalawiya', p 148

[29] Sirr, Henry Charles Ceylon and the Cingalese, Vol I & II, pp 271-272.

[30] Corea, Gamini *The Instability of an Export Economy,* Marga Institute, Colombo, 1975, p 20

being carried on a small scale.[31] The size of the production unit seems to have varied from a single loom to perhaps ten or twelve looms. 'I find there are in the villages of Koddaimunai, Koddaikkalar, Katankudim and Palamunai, over 500 compounds or gardens, each containing from four to twelve looms.'[32] Referring to the cotton cloth production in the country, Barrow surmises 'There appear to be no regular manufactures in the island: the following are of very inferior description, viz., between 300 and 400 looms in the Western, and between 500 and 600 in the Southern province...between 900 and 1000 weavers' looms in the Northern, and rather more than 600 in the Eastern province.'[33]

There was an important distinction between the weavers in the Northern and Eastern districts and in the Southern districts. In the former, whole groups of families engaged in weaving as an occupation, but in the Southern districts it was a part-time industry.[34] In Northern Jaffna weaving was carried out mainly by two classes of people known as the Kaikolas and the Cheniars.[35] During the Dutch administration, there were not only separate castes for weaving, but also for dye-root digging and dyeing of cloth.[36]

There was a horizontal division of labor within the cotton sector of the old economy, so that cloth manufacture was not essentially done in the same locality where the cotton was grown. For example, the cotton cultivated in the deep southern district of Hambantota was taken to several villages of *challias* or cinnamon-peelers in the Galle province; particularly to the vicinity of Ambalangoda, where it was manufactured by them into cloth.[37] Similarly, large quantities of cotton were brought to the coast by the road connecting Puttalam with Anuradhapura.[38] And in the same manner, the North-Central cotton came to Eastern Trincomalee.[39] In some localities, the decline of the previously thriving cotton culture forced the

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[31] Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', p. 85.

[32] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.

[33] Barrow, Sir George. *Ceylon: Past and Present*, p. 75.

[34] Corea, Gamini. *The Instability of an Export Economy*, p. 20.

[35] Katiresu, S. *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula*, p. 45; In the 1960s the important weaving community in Jaffna appeared to be Pariahs and Chenia Chettis; see Raghavan, M. D. *Tamil Culture in Ceylon: A General Introduction*, p. 257.

[36] Raghavan, M. D. *Tamil Culture in Ceylon: A General Introduction*, pp. 118-119.

[37] Bertolacci, Anthony. *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p.132

[38] Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p.36

[39] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/62/1873.

weaver to rely completely upon the raw cotton of other localities or other countries. 'The weavers of this province', GA reports, 'manufacture cloths chiefly with thread imported from other places, the quantity of cotton produced here being very trifling.'[40] The weaver in the Eastern province also had to obtain his raw material in a similar manner. 'The manufacture of cloth is an old industry in this district, but the cotton from which it is made is all imported now, instead of being locally grown as before.'[41] It is difficult to find hard evidence to establish whether there was a vertical division of labor in the cloth weaving sector as there is in the modern industry.

The cloth produced in the country varied from low value coarse cloth to high value artistic lace. 'At Batticaloa, Mannar, Chilaw and Puttalam, some white strong cloth, of different degree of fitness, is manufactured, remarkably well adapted for the dress of the natives, and of soldiers, in that warm climate At Jaffnapatnam, a great variety of coloured cloths are manufactured for the dress of the natives, by whom they are much esteemed...'[42] When the British arrived in Jaffna, there appears to have been a well-developed cloth industry. It was chiefly controlled by the immigrant craftsmen from India, encouraged by the Dutch administration; the main articles produced were coarse cloths, calicoes, handkerchiefs, shawls, stockings; all the items were made from the cotton grown in the island.[43]

At Puttalam in the North-Western province and in certain other localities of the North, considerable quantities of rough unbleached calico and towels were manufactured.[44] In the Southern province handkerchiefs, tablecloths, napkins, towels, sheets, sail-cloths, white coarse cloths, and clothes worn

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[40] Administration Reports, Northern Province, Jaffna, CO 57/54/1871

[41] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO 57/137/1898

[42] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, p 132, the raw material, the cotton with which this cloth was made was for the most part imported For an account of the traditional cloth dyeing process in Jaffna with *chaya root* (dyer's root) and other local material see Katiresu, S *A Handbook to the Jaffna*, 1905, pp 42-44 and Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon· A General Introduction*, pp 257-258

[43] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 48, this author says that foreign settlers greatly exceeded the number of native Ceylonese in the District of Jaffna

Reference is made to a colony of Andhra weavers called 'Chenia Chettis' brought down by the Dutch from Southern India and some of their descendants were still weaving excellent quality cloths into 1960s, see Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon A General Introduction*, Kalai Nilayam Ltd , Colombo, 196x, p 257

[44] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon*, Vol II, p 37

by the natives were produced.[45] The local products appear to have been popular among the consumers, at least in the early days of the British administration. 'The usual kind made for trade is the ordinary "Comboy" in all sizes and colors, and much sought after for its strength and lasting qualities. A ready market is found for it at Colombo, Galle, and some up-country towns.'[46] Referring to the Southern provinces of the island, Coomarswamy admits; 'The Sinhalese cotton was of very different quality; no muslin was made, but the best stuffs were thick, soft, and heavy like the finest linen.'[47] 'Neither cotton-printing nor dye-painting are Sinhalese crafts. All the finer cloths found in Ceylon appear to be of Indian origin.'[48] In the Eastern province '...cloth weaving is the most important, and employs a good number of people in Batticaloa, Kattankudi, and the neighbourhood of Kalmunnai. The cloth produced is not so smooth or showy as that imported from India, but is strong and durable. It is worn chiefly by the poor classes, and a certain amount of it is exported to other parts of the Island.'[49] In addition to the cloth weaving, embroidery work was practised in the island. It was an important craft in Ceylon and the work was almost exclusively in cotton.[50]

As an exception to the general picture, there appears to have been one large-scale cloth factory in the island. 'The Spinning and Weaving Mills in Wellawatte (Colombo) established in 1890, were the biggest textiles mill in Ceylon, manufacturing cloth from ginned cotton and using steam driven machinery for spinning, dyeing and bleaching. The mill employed 1,400 skilled and semi-skilled workers.'[51] There were occasions on which the yield of seed cotton cultivated on an experimental basis by the Department of Agriculture in Hambantota District was supplied to this mill.[52] Under normal circumstances, the factory appears to have received its raw material from foreign sources. 'The value of raw cotton and cotton waste imported in 1922 was £ 73,470 which is the twice the value of these imports in 1921. The raw cotton is made up by the Spinning and Weaving Mills at Colombo, ...'[53]

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[45] Barrow, Sir George. *Ceylon: Past and Present*, p. 75.
[46] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.
[47] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, p. 196.
[48] ibid., p. 202.
[49] Administration Report, Eastern Province, CO: 57 / 201/ 1920.
[50] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, pp. 202-203.
[51] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, pp. 276-277.
[52] Stockdale, F. A. 'Ceylon Agriculture', in Boards of Scholars (eds.), 1986, p. 110.
[53] Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', p. 85.

7.1.4 Government Policy

Cleghorn, at the very commencement of the British administration of the island, proposed encouraging the cotton manufactures, particularly coarse cloth production.[54] The policy pursued by the British administration was a mixed one. At one point it was friendly to local cotton cultivation and weaving and, at other times, the opposite was the case. The tax on cloths produced locally was, for a few years, injuriously raised to seven and half percent; but afterwards it was reduced to five.[55] The duty on cloths imported into the island was reduced to seven and half per cent and was therefore the same as the tax levied on the home manufactured cloth.[56] In this case, there was no tariff protection for the locally made cloth. In 1821 the government abolished the stamp duty on cotton cloth and increased the duty on imported cloth, but this policy did not have any noticeable effect.[57]

It is maintained that the British implemented sympathetic policies towards the local producer from the early years of their administration. Corea admits that, from very outset, the British administration was desirous of encouraging the local cloth industry, but this was mainly confined to the Northern Provinces. In the Southern Provinces this policy clashed with the British commercial objectives. There, the weaving was carried out by *chaliya* or cinnamon-peelers. If they had been extensively engaged in cloth production, the labor supply for cinnamon peeling, which was more profitable to the government than cotton, would have been declined.[58] However, the opportunities were still alive there: the cloths for ordinary stock in the Southern provinces were primarily produced by the tom tom beaters or drummers and not by chaliyas (**see chapter 4: *cloths***). At one

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[54] 'Notes from Mr Cleghorn's Minute dated 1st June 1799 on the Administration of Justice and of the Revenue Under the Dutch Government,' in *The Ceylon Almanac and Annual Register for the Year 1855,* William Skeen, Colombo, 1855, p 15 (appendix); Cleghorn held the office of secretary and registrar of the island and he was appointed in 1798 under the Royal Sign Manual See ibid footnote, p. 3.

[55] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, pp 133-134, Only in March of 1805, the Board of Revenue and Commerce decide that the tax on all the cloth manufactured in Ceylon should be abolished. ibid pp 133-134

[56] ibid , pp 133-134

[57] Corea, Gamini *The Instability of an Export Economy,* p 21

[58] ibid , pp 20-21, Salagama or Chalia people were originally weavers under the traditional Ceylonese caste system In accordance with the new necessity which emerged after cinnamon became an important commercial article, they were assigned to the cinnamon department of the king and the caste was subdivided See Pieris, Ralph *Sinhalese Social Organization*, p 186

stage 'A high import duty on cloth was imposed by the British in Ceylon. ... it was also felt that ... the manufacture of cloth within the colony would be encouraged by a high import duty. The duty was successively raised from 71/2 per cent until it stood at 20 per cent *ad valorem* by 1836 and since it effectively varied according to the description of cloth, the actual imposition ranged between 15 to 50 per cent.'[59]

Efforts were also made to teach cloth weaving in some government schools. 'The attempts to include industrial training in the curriculum of Government Vernacular schools have met with partial success' said the Inspector of Schools, Central Province 'Cloth-weaving entails heavy initial outlay, and war conditions have made the purchase or importation of yarn difficult and costly.'[60] Hand spinning and weaving were encouraged in some elementary schools and the growing of cotton in Ceylon was also encouraged.[61] In 1909 Governor Ridgeway proposed a higher duty on imported cotton to Ceylon purely as a revenue measure, but the Secretary of State espoused the interests of the Lancashire cotton industry and rejected the proposal.[62] The colonial government had the obligation to look after the interests of the plantation owners. It is irrefutable that the coffee plantations were also affected by the changing duties on the import of cotton goods and other commodities which were used by the plantation workers and in the factories.[63] As late as the 1920s, the government undertook to make extensive experimental trials with different types of cotton and guaranteed to purchase peasant-grown crops.[64]

> 'In June the Batticaloa Cloth Society was formed to push the interest of the local working weavers. An improvement of the local pit loom of a flying shuttle to take the place of the old hand shuttle has been introduced, and two school committees, with the assistance of the New Cloth Society, to teach the new method. By means of the new shuttle the output of the weaver can be increased by about 50 to 100 percent. Thirty members had been enrolled in the society by the end of the year. These weavers are financed by the Society,

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[59] Samaraweera, Vijaya. 'Ceylon's Trade Relations With Coromandel During Early British Times, 1796-1837', p. 11.

[60] Administration Reports, The Inspector of Schools, Central Province -Report of the Director of Education for 1918, CO: 57 /199 /1918.

[61] Whitaker, C. F Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', p. 85.

[62] de Silva, S. B. D *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 362; makes reference to Dispatch No. 537 from the Secretary of State to Governor Ridgeway, 27 August 1909, Colonial Office Papers, 54/27

[63] Van Den Driesen, I. H. *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p. 536.

[64] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 92.

which supplies them with yarn imported from India or Colombo, and buys from them such cloth as they are unable to dispose of locally '[65]

7.1.5 Cloth Imports

A limited quantity of foreign cloth was being imported into the island before the European invasions. It was primarily confined to high value luxury articles for the nobles and aristocrats. This importation continued when the maritime regions were under the pre-British Europeans and was quite noticeable during the Dutch administration. Considerable quantities of cloth were also imported into the Kandyan territories through the Dutch-controlled ports during peace time and the import declined when hostilities started and then cloth was scarce in the Kandyan territories.[66] When free trade was allowed by the Dutch, cloth from different parts of India poured into the Kandyan territories through the King's ports as well.[67] In all, the Kandyan villager was the ultimate consumer in the native kingdom. He received his cloth either from the itinerant trader or the weaver caste.[68]

Cotton and cotton goods imports took a new turn under the British administration. It became a consumer article for the overwhelming majority of the people. Cloth consumption became more than a mere physical need of a civilized society and, ultimately, the local cloth production was brought to the brink of extinction. At the start of the British administration, the island came under the Madras Presidency. It was therefore quite natural for the administration to encourage the export of the cloth manufactured in that territory to Ceylon.[69] After rice, the greatest article imported into Ceylon was cotton cloth, five-twelfths of export earnings were spent on cotton cloth imports.[70] In the early years of British rule, the value of textiles imported was rarely less than a fourth of the value of total exports.[71] 'The average annual value of imported cotton goods increased from £ 161,064 in

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[65] Administration Reports, Eastern Province, CO. 57/204/1921

[66] Arasaratnam, S 'The Kingdom of Kandy Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce, 1658-1710', *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, vol 3, no 2, July-Dec 1960, pp 117-118, makes reference to 'Report of Bystervelt's Embassy to Kandy', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, XI, ?, p 374

[67] ibid , p 122.

[68] Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, p 184

[69] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, pp 133-134

[70] ibid , p 131

[71] *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964*, p 14

the five-year period 1839-43 to £850,247 in the period 1869-73, but decreased to £532,570 in 1889-93.'[72]

TABLE No. X
COTTON GOODS IMPORTS 1839-93

Year	£ '000 (annual averages)
1838-1843	161, 064
1854-1858	337, 138
1859-1863	606, 973
1864-1868	787, 440
1869-1873	850, 247
1889-1893	532, 570

Source: Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p. 34

With the development of internal communications and trade, avenues were opened to the natives in the hinterlands to consume the articles produced in distance places. Instead of consuming coarse cloth produced in their immediate localities by known weavers, they now bought cheap and attractive cloths made by unknown weavers or machines. Some of them were made in distant localities in the island itself, but most came from foreign sources. For example; the people of North-Central Province sold most of their rice production to traders from Jaffna, Trincomalee, Kurunegala and Matale partly for money and partly in exchange for cloths and other stuffs they needed.[73] The situation was similar in the Southern province. '... at the present day the people exchange one kind of goods for another according to their respective requirements, for instance, dried fish, tobacco, areca nut, betel-leaves, coconut, pots and pans and even camboys, sarongs, white cloth, etc., are exchanged for fine grain, etc.'[74] In some instances, people fetched these items when they participated to annual festivals. For example, the Kataragama Festive season in July provided many opportunities for buying consumer articles including cloths. 'The Kandyan who attended the festival [in Kataragama] invested largely in

[72] Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth century', p. 148; for the statistics, the author refers to Ameer Ali, A. C. L. Peasant Agriculture in Ceylon, 1833-1893 (London School of Economics, unpublished M. Phil dissertation in Economic History, 1970) pp. 188-94.
[73] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/101/1887.
[74] Wijesinhe, J. E.' Food Production in the Southern Province', p. 203.

household vessels and cotton stuffs.'[75] It may be safely assumed that, in all of these cases, the proportion of imported cloth would have increased.

There was a clear trend in which the natives' preferences shifted away from local to imported articles. Only the marginal consumers such as Buddhist priests whose needs of the life were conventionally provided by lay people consumed locally made cloth.76 'The cotton cloth of which the priests' robes are made, is invariably of native manufacture, but since the Cingalese have had intercourse with Europeans, all other classes, even the poorest, endeavour to obtain calicoes of our [British] manufacture; though the texture of the native cloth is coarse, it far surpasses our own, for strength and durability.'[77] The extensive use of the cloths in the island benefited the Manchester spinners and weavers and all dependent on them.[78] By the 1920s Ceylon virtually depended on foreign sources for her entire clothing requirements. 'With the exception of a small quantity of locally manufactured cotton cloth, the whole of the textiles needed in the Island are imported.'[79]

7.1.6 Negative Effects

The importation of cotton manufactures and cotton thread and twist was chiefly from the British possessions in India.[80] The challenge posed by the

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[75] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO: 57/57/1872; Similar emporiums are reported from the Northern Mullaitive District. 'It is interesting to observe how the seats of the chief temples are still the emporiums of commerce at the festival seasons, when inhabitants of the most distant villages congregate to pray and purchase.' see: Administration Reports, Mullaitive District, CO: 57/54/1871.

76 A quiet interesting custom, as Tennent explains, had been developed over time around the offering of robes to the Buddhist priests in the island. 'In later times a curious practice prevailed, which exists to the present day; - on occasions when it was intended to make offerings of yellow robes to the priesthood, the cotton was plucked from the tree at the day-break, and "cleaned, spun, woven, dyed, and made into garments" before the setting of the sun. This custom, called *Catina Dhawna*, is first referred to in the *Rajaratnakari* in the reign of Parakramabahu I, A.D. 1153.' Tennet, Sir James Emerson(1859). *Ceylon,* vol. I, Longman, London, 1860, p.452.

[77] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, p. 272.

[78] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903: Describing The Progress of the Island Since 1803*, p. 89.

[79] Turner, L. J. B. *Handbook of Commercial and General Information for Ceylon*, p. 32.

[80] Barrow, Sir George. *Ceylon: Past and Present*, John Murray, London, 1857, pp.74-75.

British cloth was more or less the same. 'Cloth from English looms has, however, to a great extent, driven the native manufacture out of the market.'[81] It is alleged that, as British textiles destroyed the highly developed textile industry in India by the Lancashire textile industry; in Sri Lanka, too, thousands of weavers lost their livelihood to the same textile.[82] Two of the prized cloth producing districts were Jaffna and Mannar, the competition poised by the foreign products caused irreparable damage to the producers in these places. 'It is fact, that the families of weavers, which were in considerable numbers at Jaffnapatnam and Mannar, under the Dutch Government, are now much diminished, many having left the country. ... at present, one-half, or one-third, of the quantity of cloth manufactured in these provinces that there was formerly.'[83] The story of Batticaloa district in the eastern province was the same. At one time a good deal of cotton cloth was manufactured by native weavers at Batticaloa, but the industry has almost entirely ceased, being driven out by the cheapness of Manchester goods.[84] According to the Census of 1891, nearly 62 percent of the Eastern Province Muslims, who were mainly weavers, had already reverted to seasonal agriculture, being unable to compete with British cotton goods.[85] It was no different even in the hinterland territory of Sabaragamuwa. 'The manufacture of coarse fabric, which at one time was carried on to some extent at Balangoda, has been completely forgotten, and when last there I was told that there was not a loom at work in the whole district.'[86] At the beginning of the twentieth century, the traditional cloth production in many parts of the island had died out. 'Weaving used to be a considerable industry, but is now almost dead, being confined to a few old men in Wellassa. Attempts have been made to revive it and find work for the remaining weavers.'[87] 'The weaving industry still stands in need of assistance, and appears to be making little headway. Imported woven

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[81] Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p. 49.

[82] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p. 34; makes reference to S. B .D. de Silva, *ibid.*, p. 139.

[83] Bertolacci, Anthony . *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*, pp. 143-35; For similar opinions concerning Jaffna see: Corea, Gamini. *The Instability of an Export Economy*, p. 20.

[84] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1883: The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p. 51.

[85] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p. 34; makes reference to S. B. D. de Silva, *ibid.*, p. 139.

[86] Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa District, CO: 57/62/1873.

[87] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/176/1909.

articles are cheaper than anything of the same type that can be produced in the district.'[88]

The importation of foreign cloth greatly reduced the local cloth production.[89] 'The use of the Spinning Wheel seems to have been practically abandoned during the first half of last century, after cotton yarn and cotton goods of foreign manufacture became obtainable at a cheap rate; but a few persons in the interior still employ it.'[90] In the twentieth century '...Ceylon was constrained to import practically all her requirements in textiles. These usually took the form of cotton piece-goods as well as raw cotton, for the production of garments locally.'[91]

The purchase of clothing was not equally distributed throughout the year. The Sinhalese and Tamil new year season, which falls in the middle of April, is the most important period. The people used to buy new clothes for the new year from the local *boutique* or wandering Moormen.[92] The per capita cloth consumption also increased markedly in the island in the British period. During the plantation era, the population in Ceylon increased by one hundred per cent and the volume of consumption of cotton clothes increased by four to five times.[93] If a considerable percentage, if not all, of this increased demand had been catered for by local production, the native industry would have been developed to a appreciable level and fewer of the country's resources would have been wasted. The fact was rightly highlighted by Guha when the country was close to her political independence. 'Besides the enormous manpower running hopelessly to waste almost all the Island over may be very usefully harnessed in the promotion of cottage industries especially hand-loom weaving in the rural areas. We must not forget that Ceylon imports 20 million rupees worth of clothing materials every year.'[94]

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[88] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/204/1921.
[89] Corea, Gamini. *The Instability of an Export Economy*, p. 20.
[90] Parker, H. *Ancient Ceylon*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1981, p. 563.
[91] Wickremeratne, L. A 'Economic Development in the Plantation Sector c. 1900-1947', p 429
[92] Williams, Harry. *Ceylon Pearl of the East*, , p 169
[93] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903*, p 88
[94] Guha, K D 'Industrial Problems of Ceylon', *The Ceylon Economic Journal*, vol. vii, Dec 1935, p 32, An Address delivered at the Rotary Club, Colombo, on 14th Nov., 1935

7.1.7 Summary

Both local cotton cultivation and cloth weaving declined during the period under review. In previous times, cotton cloth weaving in the island had entirely depended on the local cotton growing. Cotton cultivation during the British period had to face two pronged attacks. On the one hand, it had to compete with the cheap and high quality imported raw cotton and, on the other, from cotton cloths of similar quality. The demand for raw cotton, as an input for cloth production, is a derived demand. As the demand for locally made cotton cloth declined, the demand for raw cotton automatically followed suit.

It is quite obvious that the cloth consumption in the island had been shared between local production and imported material since the pre British period. The share of imported cloths, however, compared with the British period was no more than a trifling quantity, but it reached an unprecedented level under British rule. Increasingly, cloth imports not only catered for the increased local demand, but also the shift in demand from local production to imported materials. There is no strong evidence to support the argument that the resources withdrawn from local cotton cultivation and cloth production were being utilized in more efficient sectors in the economy as modern trade theories suggest. This was certainly not the case in the drier parts of the country where cotton cultivation and part of the cloth weaving and dyeing had mainly been concentrated. In the wetter parts, new opportunities were mostly opened in parallel with the plantation economy, but, compared with the impact of increased population and immigrant Indian laborers, it is not safe to conclude that sufficient opportunities were opened for the displaced resources in those provinces.

7.2 Attire and Ornaments: *welcome freedom to new tastes*

7.2.1 General Remarks

The investigation of attire and ornaments during the British period is inherently complicated and complex in nature. The old caste system was giving way to the new class system in the period. The origin of this class structure of the island is predominantly related to English education and modern economic practices concentrated around the plantations and, to a lesser extent, in mining.[95] The old nobles and aristocrats gradually lost

[95] Wiswa Warnapala, W. A. *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon: A Study in*

power to the wealthy and English-educated natives. Some of the old nobles and aristocrats managed to maintain their prestigious social position by working on modern lines or becoming low-grade officials of the British administration. A westernized urban-dwelling class was emerging in the period. In parallel, manual laborers, office workers, petty business people, contractors, transport contractors and many other new forms of social groups came into being. There was a fairly strong immigrant European community, mainly in the capital city of Colombo and a few in other cities in the plantations. A strong immigrant Indian community became a resident labor force on the plantations. Some matrimonial relations, although the number was negligible, cut across the different communities and castes. Communications, commerce, and then money economy became deeply rooted in the old isolated villages. Attire and ornaments showed some sort of relation with all these changes, so that it merits a separate, lengthy study to inquire into how modern forces brought changes to the traditional attire and ornaments and into their economic and social consequences. This obviously goes beyond the scope of our study. Our mission here is to give no more than a slender treatment as a complement to the forgoing discussion.

The maritime provinces had gone through considerable changes under the Portuguese and the Dutch before the British. Nevertheless, the traditional structure survived side by side with the modern features. By contrast, in the Kandyan provinces, the traditional life style had been largely preserved.

7.2.2 Clothing of the Ordinary Man and Woman

Male: The dress of the poor Sinhalese male at the beginning of the British rule was more or less similar to what it had been in the pre-European periods. 'The dress of the poorer sorts of the Cinglese ...consists merely of a piece of coarse cloth wrapped around their loins, and covering their thighs, or frequently the parts which decency requires to be concealed.'[96] This traditional outfit or the *loin cloth* was worn by men -even youngsters - when they were at work or bathing until quite recently.[97] Even nowadays,

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Bureaucratic Adaptation, Department of Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, 1974, pp. 16-19.

[96] Percival, Robert. *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p. 218.

[97] For example see; Raven-Hart, R. *Ceylon History in Stone*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Colombo, 1964, plates nos. 30, 37 and 44 and Ryan, Bryce. *Sinhalese Village*, University of Miami Press, Florida, 1958, plates of toiling males (not numbered) and compare the same with females at work.

the people belonging to the older generations, especially in the countryside, mostly wear this piece of cloth when they are at work. It appears that this form of clothing was widely worn by poor men throughout the day during the early British period. The sunny, warm and humid climate might have encouraged this practice as it has the western tourist in his outfit on the hot tropical beach.

Even in the middle of the nineteenth century, the centuries-old traditions seem to have been more evident in the Kandyan provinces than in the maritime provinces, although the society was gradually transforming itself from a caste-based society to a class-based one. The very lowest class in Kandy wore '...only a small piece of cloth, or a handkerchief, which they gird about their loins.'[98] The intercourse between people from different provinces, especially between maritime provinces and Kandyan provinces, seems to have had leveling effects on the traditional living style. 'Every coming year sees the low-country man advancing along the Kandyan roads, building boutiques as he comes, ousting the Kandyan, and spreading low-country fashions as to dress and speech.'[99] Similarly some seem to have resorted to different strategies to acquire the social dignity which had been denied to them in the traditional society. 'It is believed that many low-caste people emigrate to other districts, and that some of them there pass themselves off as Wellalas. In the low-country they sometimes put on trousers, cut their hair, and call themselves Eurasians.'[100]

The social and regional differences in costume were being displaced when the island was under British rule. The ordinary male's attire appears to have been assuming a universal form before the end of the 19th century. 'The average Sinhalese gentleman is a curiosity, so far as his "get-up" is concerned. Instead of pantaloons he wears about two yards of cloth, either plain or figured, white or coloured, wound tightly around his legs from his waist down to his feet, held either by a belt at the waist or by rolling the edge under.'[101] Even now, the ordinary male invariably wears this garment called a *sarong* and those who wear European clothes in visiting or in their workplaces finally retreat to ordinary male attire at home, whatever their social or economic background. At the end of the British period, the *loin cloth* seems to have confined only to the toiling hours of the day. 'The men wear ... when at work only a very minimum necessary to hide their

[98] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, p. 34.
[99] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO: 57/176/1909.
[100] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/54/1871.
[101] Hornandy, William T. *Two Years in the Jungle,* p. 239.

nakedness from the waist downwards...'[102] The dress of the ordinary Jaffna man, in the early 20th century was explained as follows. 'The average Jaffna man generally uses ... dyed cloth and the reason is that it wears better and lasts longer than the white cloth.'[103] The province had a flourishing cloth dyeing industry at one stage and this would have been another reason for the popularity of the colored clothes there. Like other ordinary Ceylonese of the time, the taste of Jaffna man was '... simple in his dress as in his food and many a bitter quarrel over a tailor's bill is thus avoided.'[104]

Female: In the Kandyan districts the traditional system of attire survived into the nineteenth century and the women of the lower castes were not accustomed to cover their upper parts of the body, nor they were allowed to do so.[105] Low caste women were forbidden to wear cover over their bosoms under the native monarchs and 'The length of comboy was also determined in the same arbitrary manner ... a low caste women had scarcely sufficient covering to answer the purpose of decency.' Sirr goes on to say that the colonial '...government most correctly abolished these laws...'[106] Barrow distinguishes between the garb of the higher and lower classes in the middle of the 19th century. 'The women of this[high] caste wear cloth down to their heels, one end of which is flung over their shoulders to cover their breast; other women go without this upper covering.'[107] This account, however, appears to be about women who were out visiting. In the maritime provinces every female seems have worn a short jacket to cover her breasts, irrespective of her caste, at the beginning of the British period. 'Their dress consists of a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, and reaching down to their ankles; among the very poorest class it does not reach below the knee. They wear also a short jacket which usually covers the bosom and shoulders...'[108]

Some changes seem to have affected feminine attire first in the maritime provinces through the European influence. 'In the maritime provinces, the women wear a short loose cotton jacket which scarcely reaches to the waist, and too often leaves the bosom completely exposed to view, and a comboy exactly similar to that which is worn by the males. The jacket was

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[102] Williams, Harry *Ceylon Pearl of the East,* p 163
[103] Katiresu, S *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula,* p. 44.
[104] ibid , p 102
[105] Wickremeratne, L A 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c 1900', p 171, makes reference to Cordiner, Rev James *A Description of Ceylon,* London, 1807, p 87 ff.
[106] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol II, pp 37-38
[107] Barrow, Sir George *Ceylon Past and Present*, p 77
[108] Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon,* p 218

introduced by the Portuguese'[109] The average female's indoor attire seems to have taken a universal form, with few regional variations, at the end of the British administration. 'The usual feminine wear, however, consists of two pieces of clothing, a bodice with short sleeves and lace at the throat, usually of white material, and a coloured cloth from the hips downwards. There is a gap of about three inches of firm brown flesh between the two garments...'[110] This costume seems to have received much influence from the maritime provinces. South Indian Tamil culture predominantly exists in the Northern provinces of the Island, where Jaffna women's attire at the beginning of the 20th century is explained by Katiresu as 'In simplicity of her dress she excels all others in the world....She wears a short jacket and her cloth *(cheelai)* is one of about 7 1/2 yards in length.'[111]

7.2.3 Clothing of High Ranking Natives

There seems to have been significant differences between the attire and ornaments of the ordinary population and the high ranking natives. The members of the latter social groups always appear to have worn elegant, stylish garb and other body adornments in order to distinguish themselves from the ordinary masses. The following description is from the turn of the 19th century. The '...superior ranks [Cinglese] are far from being regardless of dress. The men of the better sort usually wear a piece of calico wrapped round their waists, and either allowed to hang loose down to their ankles, or drawn together between the legs in the form of wide trousers. ... The body is covered by a jacket with sleeves, which unites the appearance of a shirt and waistcoat and is buttoned at the neck and waist ... A great number of buttons are used, and they are either of silver, gold, or precious stones.'[112] The superiority seems to have been maintained with the same vigour into the middle of the 19th century. 'The middle classes in Kandy wear a comboy, which reaches either to, or below the knee, according to their caste ... In the maritime provinces, the men of middle rank usually wear a jacket, made either of cloth or cotton, the comboy being the same as that which is worn in Kandy.'[113] There seems to have been considerable differences between high class maritime people and their counterparts in

[109] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol. II, p. 37.
[110] Williams, Harry. *Ceylon: Pearl of the East*, p. 163.
[111] Katiresu, S. *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula*, p. 102.
[112] Percival, Robert . *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p. 219.
[113] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, pp. 34-35.

the Kandyan provinces. In the Kandyan provinces '...the high comb and long comboy are no longer visible, a handkerchief taking the place of the first, and a very short cloth or petticoat being used as a substitute for the last. The black paper umbrella is scarcely seen, the leaf of the palm being used as a protection against the sun's rays in its stead.'[114] Their maritime counterparts, however, appear to have long been subject to European influences. 'In the maritime provinces the nobles, or moodaliars, who are also generally in the service of our government [British administration], adopt a dress of a most heterogeneous nature, as they have engrafted European fashions upon their national costume...'[115] In contrast to this practice, the nobles and chieftains in the Kandyan provinces clung to their traditional costume.[116]

The high ranking Kandyan women distinguished themselves from the low ranking females. They normally concealed their bosoms from the low ranking population. The following description of attire appears to refer to the high caste women. 'The dress of the Kandyan women consists of a comboy bound tightly round the person, and a scarf, which is most gracefully thrown around them, and over the shoulders, so as entirely to conceal their bosoms.'[117] The distinction prevalent between Kandyan and maritime male attire and ornaments also extended to the females: 'High-caste women [in Kandy] may wear a single robe, twelve feet in length, skillfully wound round the breasts and hanging in full skirts from the hips.'[118]

7.2.4 Changes Brought about during the British Period

The attire and ornaments of both males and females and also of all castes and classes changed considerably during the British period. When the indoor garb is compared with the outdoor, the latter is found to have changed markedly. 'When visiting, both sexes wear their "best" white or brown jackets over their best clothes for men, and a similar garment for the women but with puffed shoulders, wide, frilled collar around the neck and

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[114] ibid., p. 71.
[115] ibid., p. 33; the author says their coat was introduced by the Dutch. See: ibid. footnotes.
[116] ibid., p. 31.
[117] ibid., p. 35.
[118] Williams, Harry . *Ceylon. Pearl of the East,* p. 163.

puffed sleeves reaching only to the elbows.'[119] The European fashion might have been added to the outdoor earlier than to the indoor. Referring to some native visitors to the Beligam rest house, Haeckel says 'In point of fact, as I entered the dimly lighted house, I saw four ladies sitting on the bench, dressed in European fashions, it is true, but in very bad taste.'[120] The changes seem not always to have been smooth and unperturbed. 'In the maritime districts in general however, two parallel tendencies had long been at work. To some extent the existence of a hierarchy of native officials jealous of their rights and sensitive to the symbols which emphasized their social preeminence, was the basis for a similar correlation between dress and caste. On the other hand the leveling tendencies of European rule and the nature of European dress undermined the functional role of dress as a means of emphasising social distinction.'[121] Changes in attire and ornaments were seen as a indication of prosperity. 'Another manifest indication of the prosperity of the Kandyan villagers is seen in the quantity of European articles of clothing that men, women and children now adopt - shirts, coats, and caps for the males; jackets, shawls, and gewgaws for the women. The desire to assume such articles of dress is to be deplored, but the prosperity which permits Kandyan villagers to find spare cash for such luxuries is sufficiently evident.'[122]

Changes were effected to the high class Muslim community as well. 'The wealth, the power and influence gained through the economic enterprises provided the foundation for the emergence of a Muslim elite in Sri Lanka Lanka alongside Sinhalese and Tamil elites.... Elite Muslims modeled their life-styles on western practices, especially in education and dress.'[123] The European suit became an essential character of the newly emerged middle class to whatever caste, race or creed they belonged.

> 'During the British times, for the most part, the term [middle class] included the white collar workers in the government and major mercantile establishments. In the late nineteenth century it makes among males included proficiency in English and the wearing of respectable habit, either trousers and coat or calf-length cloth over trousers worn with a coat. In subsequent years trousers, shirt and coat became the predominant style, being opposed to sarong and banian (or sarong and coat).'[124]

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[119] ibid., p. 163.

[120] Haeckel, Ernst . 'A Visit to Ceylon', p. 165.

[121] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Education and Social Changes, 1832 to c. 1900', in *University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon,* vol. 3, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973, p. 171.

[122] Administration Reports-vol. I, Central Province, CO: 57/161/1905.

[123] Kamil Asad, M. N. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Lanka Under the British Rule*, p. 126.

[124] Roberts, Michael, Raheem, Ismeth and Colin-Thome P. *People In between: The*

The Ceylonese middle-class, influenced by the quality consciousness, chose expensive English cloth in preference to cheaper Indian clothes.[125] The city dwellers, as a rule, were pioneers in the consumption of novel goods and services. They then became an archetype for the rest of the society living in the countryside. The process could be applied to Ceylonese society during the British period. Colombo, as the capital city of the island, became the centre for absorbing western fashions and transmitting them to rural areas The growing rural-urban relations accelerated the process. 'Those resident at Colombo have approximated to Europeans in their costumes and in their domestic manners.'[126] 'Colombo was fast becoming a prime site for symbolic display. without exhausting power, or being synonymous with it, in British Ceylon status display and conspicuous consumption were also a form of power.'[127] Nevertheless, the Ceylonese were not always prepared to accept European fashions without proper socio-economic backing.

> ' the Portuguese Burghers who with the passage of time had lost their European characteristics became virtually indistinguishable from of the mass of the people in the maritime districts Economically too, the town dwelling Portuguese Burgher was far below the mass of the Sinhalese peasants and eked out a precarious existence as a skilled workman In spite of these changes the Portuguese Burghars passed off as European and laid claim to the privileges which accrued to Europeans - more by implication rather than by specific enactment - in early nineteenth century Ceylon Because realities did not accord with these pretensions, the Portuguese Burgher with his predilection for European attire - hats, shoes and stockings -was an object of derision both in the eyes of Englishmen as well as the conventional Ceylonese '[128]

The changes affected not only the native's lives, but also those of the immigrant Britons themselves in the island. A planter explained his personal experience of the changes in attire among the British community in the up-country plantation districts during the second half of the 19th century.

> 'I only know our simple ways suddenly changed in many places, such as in dressing for dinner, and all that sort of thing, never heard of in the jungle

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Burgers and the Middle in the Transformation within Sri Lanka, 1790s- 1960s, vol 1, Sarvodaya Book Publishing Services, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka Lanka, 1989, p 27

[125] Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon,* pp 81, 100

[126] Barrow, Sir George *Ceylon Past and Present,* John Murray, London, 1857, p 88

[127] Roberts, Michael et al, *People Inbetween,* p 29

[128] Wickremeratne, L A 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c 1900', p 167

before the sixties. Previous to that time even tweed was a material seldom seen on planters, who dressed in cottons, and there are old planters left in the country to this day who have never changed from it. A black coat, like a black hat, was a great rarity, unless it was alpacca.'[129]

7.2.5 Jewelry

Gold: Under the Sinhalese kings, there were strict regulations for the wearing of ornaments as it was the case with attire. A number of references are made to the natives' jewelry in the Kandyan Kingdom: almost all references, except to the monarchy, were about the ornaments made from silver or low grade metals. The individual freedom granted under the British was a disguised blessing to the native in enabling him to venture on previously unknown taste. 'Chains of gold, bangles, and rings are now worn alike by all the Kandian nobles, chiefs and wealthy men, but, under the native dynasty, none could use golden ornaments without the monarch's sanction.'[130] To increase the colonial government's revenue, Governor North introduced a new tax called joy tax. But the natives' taste had changed and they wanted to secure their newly acquired consumer freedom without any extra economic burden, rather than parting with it. 'The word "joy" is a corruption of a Portuguese word meaning jewel, trinket, or ornament, and it was so called because the tax was levied on the luxury of wearing ornaments of gold, silver, or other metal, stone, pearls, ivory, glass, conch, chank, or bone. Every male person, young or old, was required to take a license for wearing "joys" by paying one rix-dollar per annum; and every female, half a rix dollar. This tax caused unexpected opposition. ...was abolished in 1806.'[131] There were occasions on which Cingalese chiefs wore extremely costly ornaments of embossed gold studded with precious stones.[132]

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[129] By a Planter, *Ceylon in the Fifties and the Eighties*, p. 24; The number of British in Ceylon never exceeded ten thousand and the majority of them were proprietary planters and representatives of commercial interests. see: Perera, A. B. 'Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon', p. 52.

[130] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, p. 32.

[131] Perera, Father S. G. *A History of Ceylon II: The British Period and After 1796-1956*, p. 65.

[132] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, pp. 36-37.

7.2.6 Shoes

The wearing of sandals or shoes was not a traditional practice in Ceylon, neither it was allowed by the Sinhalese kings. The native officials who worked under the colonial administration seem to have been gradually getting used to this uncommon practice. 'The national custom is, for none save those of royal blood, to wear any covering on their feet. In Kandy some few of the chiefs occasionally wear a kind of sandal, but all other classes go barefooted. The Moodliers, when attending to the duties of their offices, wear both shoes and stockings, but immediately upon returning to their own domiciles, they throw off these encumbrances; the remainder of the natives both male and female, do not wear any covering on their legs or feet.'[133] The tradition of walking barefooted was checking during the British period. By the 1930s, there seems to have been a growing market for the boots and shoes in the Island. 'The market for boots and shoes at present is not a large one in the types of Australian or English shoes, both for women and men. There is a growing demand by the middle and poorer classes for boots and shoes, but this is satisfied by the cheaper brands from India...'[134]

7.2.7 Hair Decorations

The external appearance of the hair decoration of Kandyan women seems to have been same as it was in the previous times, but some of the women were using gold pins, which were restricted by the Kandyan monarchs.

> 'Their hair is drawn from their faces, and twisted into a knot at the back of the head, where it is confined, either by gold or silver pins, which are usually most exquisitely chased. ... All women, whether of high or low degree ... draw their locks from off their brows and twist them into a knot at the back of their head; the hair being maintained in form by tortoiseshell, silver or golden pins. Words will not convey an adequate idea of the exquisite effect produced by this style of ornamenting the head, which is as simple as elegant. These pins do not assimilate, in the most remote degree, with the bodkins used either by the Russian, Swiss, or Italian peasantry, and are equally dissimilar to those worn by the Chinese; and in no part of the globe in which we have been, have we seen anything resembling them in form, or beauty.'[135]

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[133] ibid., p. 34

[134] Sanderson, R. F et al, *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p. 101.

[135] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, pp. 35-36.

Sirr continues his descriptions with an account of hair ornaments of females in the Kandyan provinces. 'Our surprise has been great, that some of our own lovely countrywomen have not adopted these classical and becoming ornaments for their tresses. An ill-natured friend has suggested that Britain's fair daughters will not patronise any fashion or mode which does not emanate from that emporium of good taste and paradise of ladies, designated Paris.'[136] In the maritime provinces, the wearing of a hair ornament by males was a practice that was not followed in the Kandyan provinces. In both groups of provinces males seem to have grown their hair long instead of the universal short-cut hair of the later periods. 'The high comb is invariably used in the maritime provinces by all ranks save the poorest and lowest - but the Kandians, although their hair is allowed to grow to a great length, merely draw it back from the face, and twist it into a knot at the back of the head. The men occasionally wear a cotton handkerchief, tied round their head, to protect them from the sun...'[137]

In the middle of the 19th century, the poor natives still had the habit of borrowing jewelry as in earlier times. In addition, a practice seems have grown up of hiring wedding dresses The following remarks were made by Sirr after an evening visit to the bride's house of a poor family in the low country, where a wedding ceremony was to be held on the morning of the next day. 'We asked to see the bride elect, and her mother, but were informed that the former was absent, having gone to procure water, and the latter to hire the bride's dress and borrow jewels from her friends.'[138] The Tamil women appear to have worn more expensive jewelry during the period. Compared with the simple attire of the Jaffna women, their ornaments were highly elaborate and expensive. 'We cannot say the same thing about her [Jaffna women] jewelry which is neither simple nor cheap.'[139] Jaffna goldsmiths enjoyed a great reputation for producing fine and delicate jewelry.[140] Coomaraswamy claimed that the most beautiful of all Indian jewelry was that of Jaffna in Ceylon.[141] Nevertheless, the goldsmith's work of Mullaitive District in the same Northern Province seems to have had a bad reputation. 'There are a fair number of working goldsmiths, but their work is of the roughest and the jewelry here make is only for local use.'[142] In general, the '...native jewelers evince considerable

[136] ibid , p 37
[137] ibid , pp 34-35
[138] ibid , p 182
[139] Katiresu, S *A Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula,* p 102
[140] Raghavan, M D *Tamil Culture in Ceylon A General Introduction,* p 258
[141] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon,* p 155
[142] Administration Reports - vol 1, Mullaitive District, CO 57/157/1904

taste, and some dexterity, in their gold and silver work '[143] 'The jewelry of the up-country and low-country women shows a difference in so far as the former is older and more national whilst the latter is more modern '[144] Nails are not painted, cheeks are not rouged and lips are not painted by women in the countryside, but at times these are practised, powder is used freely in large quantities [145]

7.2.8 Summary

Caste and social status were the factors which ultimately determined people's attire and ornaments in traditional Ceylonese society Economic power or impotence, which as a matter of course was mainly hereditary rather than a product of human exertion, naturally revolved around these two factors The dismantling of the old customs, rising incomes, mechanization, the development of communications, the wide availability of imported materials and changing attitudes transformed clothing consumption patterns in the island The natives' needs of attire and ornaments which harmonized with the climatic conditions and were sanctioned by tradition were undermined by the new social values They became something more than a physical need restrained by the old tradition

7.3 Health and Hygiene: *from forest pharmacy to imported medicines*

7.3.1 General Remarks

The island had a comparatively advanced medical system in the past 146 It was capable enough of providing solutions to the health problems of the day The medications were mostly herbal plants collected from the native's living environment As a whole, the native medical system was not

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[143] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, p 267
[144] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon* pp 118-119
[145] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon*, p 119
146 Some of the traditional societies outside the western world seem to have had highly advanced medical systems See for example an autobiography of a Lama around a temple of Tibetan medicine Rampa, T Lobsang(1956) *The Third Eye*, Corgi Books, London, 1985

commercialized. Under the British, modern treatments were introduced and the native gradually turned to the new system. The traditional system was successfully marginalized, although not fully replaced by the modern system.

7.3.2 Native Treatments

The natives of the island, from time immemorial, used the traditional medical system. Every member of society appears to have had a basic knowledge of the native medicines and treatments. In addition, there were native doctors or *vedaralas* and they were consulted only if the basic knowledge of the ordinary man was not sufficient to meet the need. All in all, the natives seem to have been contented with what they had.

> 'I spoke to the people at Aluthnuwara about the present health and the facilities for obtaining medical treatment. Everyone present agreed, that no improvement on the present state of things is needful as far as the pattu is concerned. On an average of every five villages there is a leading medical man (Vedarala), while in each village there are from two to three minor practitioners. In addition to these, there are the Buddhist priests, who almost invariably have a knowledge of native medicine.'[147]

The medications were generally made from the herbal plants collected in nearby woods. Whether these treatments were primitive or not, scientific or unscientific, the natives had managed to find reasonable solutions to their contemporary health problems. The advent of British rule was followed by the western system of medicine, treatments, hospitals and dispensaries equipped on western lines in both the maritime and Kandyan provinces; unification of administration and adoption of western medical science went hand in hand in the island.[148] It took some time for all these new practices to penetrate into the substructure of Ceylonese society.

As might be expected, people naturally inclined towards the traditional treatments rather than the western practices in the early stages of the British rule. There was some sort of early resentment of the alien treatments even when they were available. It was very difficult to induce the people to go to the government hospitals until they had become so ill as to be nearly incurable.[149]

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[147] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/99/1886.
[148] Weerasooria, N. E. *Ceylon and Her People*, p. 48.
[149] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/99/1886.

> 'Except the native vedarala, the villagers have no means within their reach of obtaining treatment for sickness, and even in the places where there are Government dispensaries, the people prefer their own practitioners, whose fees are paid in kind and are within their means, to paying even the few cents for which they can get European medicines '[150]

The natives seem to have developed a considerable distrust not only of the western treatments, but also of the care available in a modern hospital, even if the service was provided free of charge. The Acting Assistant Government Agent of Nuwarakalawiya, in his 1871 Administration Report, gives the following description of the free hospital at Anuradhapura.

> 'There is a fine pauper hospital of the station, which, like most of the Ceylon hospitals, is remarkable chiefly for its emptiness This was not for want of patients in the district, but the people, wrongly of course, have an idea, that patients are not only neglected, but killed there; they seldom go to the hospital, unless they cannot get food or attendance outside, and, even then, they go more to obtain food than medicine The hospital wards are not so small and cozy as the patient's accustomed mud hut, and if he has friends, they are not allowed constant access to him, the medicines given are strange and outlandish, and are given without any religious ceremonies, which are sometimes considered essential to proper and orthodox doctoring, he thinks the trouble he gives is grudged, and if he dies, his friends, who are by nature ignorant and suspicious, and who often suspect the same thing among themselves, think that poison may purposely, or by accident, have been administered with those outlandish drugs, or at all events, that the patient was not cared for and fed as he ought to have been '[151]

It is true that the natives' health system was an inseparable element of the centuries-old social institutions. The religious and other beliefs were essential parts of this fabrication and these were not strange to many societies similar to Ceylon. The charms and rituals surrounded by numerous beliefs had an important role to play in the traditional treatment system 'The patients were taken to a *pansala,* where the medical officer reports they were treated with charms and mixture of clay and other substances, which latter it seems only promoted the disease.'[152] A similar account is available from the same district written by the medical officer of Trincomalee town during the influenza epidemic in 1918

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[150] Administration Reports, Kandy District, CO 57/99/1886

[151] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO 57/54/1871

[152] Administrative Report of the Government Agent, Trincomalee district, 1915, p 15, Colombo, 1916, quoted in Meegama, S A Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and Social Development* pp 88-89

> 'Owing to the combined effects of superstition, ignorance and bad example, a large number of patients had hardly any treatment About three-fourths of the number of people who died had as their treatment starvation and imbibation of coriander water only The prevalent idea among the so-called educated and uneducated mass was that decease was caused by an evil spirit But I am of the opinion that deaths rather than disease could be attributed to such an occasion [153]

Through the eyes of modern science, it is quite easy to see only one aspect of the traditional health system. In folk medicine there is more to treatment than magical or religious rituals, however effective this may be psychologically in providing emotional catharsis and reassurance.[154] The traditional practices related to treatments had to pass through the machine of modernization for a considerable period in order to be transformed themselves. Folk medicine does not easily change under the impact of sustained contact with the industrialized world, or even as a result of deliberate attempts to introduce new conceptions of disease and hygiene.[155]

> ' when the villager gets ill he first tries native treatment, and only reports to European treatment if the vedarala fails to cure him Great faith is placed in European treatment for fever, but for dysentery native treatment is generally preferred Many of the vedarals no doubt have considerable skill. In surgical cases, fracture, abscess, and so on the villager too often fights shy of the hospital as he dreads an operation An exception is the Colombo Eye Hospital, the reputation of which appears to be high in most parts of the district '[156]

The native doctor, as a principle, was not in the habit of charging a fee for his consultancy service and medications. The traditional medical profession was not commercialized; its essence was service to humanity.[157] The native doctor happily accepted what was given either in money or in kind. On occasions where a fee was levied, it seems to have been proportionate to the economic ability and social status of the patient who consulted him.

> 'All, as a matter of course, exact no charge from a patient unless a cure is effected Many prescribe for and even feed the sick who consult them, gratuitously for the sake or merit The fee when recovered is proportioned to

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[153] Administrative Report of the Government Agent, Trincomalee district, 1918, p II, Colombo, 1919; quoted ibid , p 90

[154] Hughes, Charles C 'Ethno medicine', *International Encyclopaedia of Social Science*, The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1968, p 90

[155] ibid , p 91

[156] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/170/1907

[157] Weerasooria, N E *Ceylon and Her People*, p 223

> the rank and the wealth of the patient. Thus, for the same amount of prescription and drugs, a very rich Disawa might pay Rs 50, a moderately will off Ratemahatmaya Rs 20, a Korale Rs 5, and ordinary cultivator Rs 2, and a village pauper *nil* '[158]

On some occasions, the British provincial administration did not provide good testimonies about native practitioners and their treatments. Some of the administration officials were of the opinion that the native practitioners were necessarily inferior, injurious and not competent enough to treat diseases.

> 'There can be no doubt that whole system of native surgeons (I desire to distinguish between surgery and medicine) is barbarous and rude, and cruel; and it is to be hoped that the establishment of a Medical School in Colombo may lead to the knowledge of more advanced and less cruel practices than are at present in vogue amongst the native doctors '159

A number of matching accounts are available from the administration reports written about different provinces and districts in the island. The following description appears in the Mannar district report

> 'Recourse is still had to a very considerable extent to the native 'parians' or doctors they yet maintain many injurious forms of treatments .. they refuse to allow their patient to touch any food Cases have come to knowledge where persons treated by these men have died literally of weakness, having taken no nourishment of any kind for several days after the fever had left them . '160

It is a common practice among natives even today to give easily digestible foods and beverages to fever patients and most of these practices are related in one way or another to the native treatments. Here the reporter seems to have been either highly pessimistic about native treatments or highly exaggerative in reporting what he had seen or heard.

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[158] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO 57/99/1886

159 Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO 57/54/ 1871

160 Administration Report of the Government Agent for the Mannar Distinct, 1902, p 17, Colombo, 1903, quoted in Meegama, S A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development* Thesis submitted for Ph D , London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 1968, p 8

7.3.3 Causes of Diseases

The colonial writings reveal that a number of disturbing diseases were prevalent in the island during the period. They range from simple influenza and feverishness to fatal and communicable diseases, such as cholera and smallpox. The causes of the diseases were multiple and highly complex and could be range from basic lack of hygiene in the society to the importation of diseases from foreign sources.

Climatic conditions and basic amenities: One of the reasons for the diseases was the unhealthy climatic conditions and poor basic amenities in the island. This seems to have been further aggravated by the scanty attention paid by the authorities to maintaining a congenial living environment. Nevertheless, the responsibility for maintaining a poor living environment in the island goes back beyond the European occupations, not to speak of the British administration. 'All the part of the District which is freely exposed to the influence of the sea-breeze is on the whole healthy, but towards the interior, where lofty forests check all circulation of air, and where extensive swamps and neglected tanks give rise to noxious miasma, the people are much subject to fever, lingering ulcers, and various coetaneous diseases.'161 While one of the administration reports admits that the drier climate is better for good health, another discounts the same reason. 'As illustrated many times in the past, the health of the people is always better in dry years.'162 'Fever has been exceedingly prevalent throughout the district during the year, due partly to the abnormal drought and party to the scarcity of food.'163 It is not easy to correlate the severity of diseases simply with a climatic factor. It was '... difficult to establish a simple relationship between drought, famine and failure of crops and increased mortality because of the distorting factor due to malaria.'164 One year's drought does not cause a major change in the death rate, but a prolongation of drought does.165

As anywhere in the world, the constitution of the food and drinking water have quite directly affected the health of the people in the island. These two

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161.Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p.37.

162 Administrative of the Government Agent, Mannar district, 1916, p.14, Colombo, 1917; quoted in Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* p. 66.

163 Administration Reports, Matale District, CO: 57/105/1888.

164 Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* p.66.

165 ibid., p.67.

factors appear to have been much more critical in the drier provinces where paddy cultivation and, in many instances, drinking water was obtained from artificial reservoirs called tanks. The long neglect of the maintenance of tanks and the prolongation of the drier seasons meant the loss of both good food and drinking water. So that mere medical facilities could not deal with the chronic causes of disease. 'The natives unanimously concur in stating that at one time the Jungle Pattus were much more healthy than at present, and account for the change by the existence of numerous tanks, then used for irrigation, but now neglected.'166

The disease called parangi was another illness which invariably haunted different parts of the island during this period. The major cause of the disease seems to have been lack of nutritious foods and drinking water. 'There was a wretched hospital filled with miserable sufferers from the disease called 'parangi' which no one had understood properly to suggest a cure for till the principal Medical Officer, Dr Quinsy, boldly pronounced it to be simply disease by which the population was literally rotting away arising from bad food and bad water. 'You are the proper doctor,' said he to me. 'Give these poor wretches good water, good air by clearing the jungle round the village by good food by abundant rice crops, and you will perform a greater cure than all the doctors and hospitals in Ceylon can ever effect.' I took his advice and he was perfectly right.'167 This is further confirmed by the administration report of Matale for the year 1888. 'Parangi has also slightly increased, and its presence is invariably ascribed by the natives to the want of rice and the consumption of nothing but kurakkan. This may or may not be scientifically correct: but parangi is unknown among those classes who can always get rice to eat.'168 Meegama maintains that the relationship between staple food supplies and mortality rates has a wider significance for drier parts of the island 169

The immigrant Indian laborers worked in the plantations and so were living in the "modern" sector of the economy. One of the causes of illness among this laboring population was the low consumption of good food; perhaps due to their own misguided efforts at being thrifty: 'Rather than spend a part of their wages on rice and other wholesome foodstuffs, the coolies choose rather to consume a minimum of the former, which was

166 Brodie, A. O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 38.

167 Gregory, Sir William, quoted in Wijesinhe, J E. 'Peasant Prosperity', p. 225

168 Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/105/1888

169 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* pp 99-100

relatively expensive, and use as substitutes, the roots and herbs they dug up in the forests. This self-imposed semi starvation soon weakened their physiques, and made them susceptible to a host of diseases.'170 'In addition, the food supply of the poorer classes is frequently insufficient and unsuitable, their food in many instances for a certain portion of the year consisting of the roots and fruits of palmyrah tree or jungle fruits. Even those who are more well-to-do subsist principally, on rice and fish, vegetables being rarely obtainable.'171 As a whole, the food supply of the island greatly checked the population growth and, with the availability of imported food, the destructive efforts of epidemics were lessened.172

7.3. 4 Cholera and Small Pox from India

The most harmful two infectious diseases which intermittently spread out in British Ceylon were cholera and smallpox. In many instances, the origin of these two diseases was India. More often than not they arrived with the immigrant laborers for the plantations. For a considerable period of time there was no quarantine arrangements in the island for the immigrants, visitors or those returning from foreign visits. '... [I]n the absence of quarantine arrangements, cholera and smallpox were quite easily carried by immigrants or other visitors from the endemic areas of the Indian sub-continent...'173

The governor Gregory, addressing the opening session of Legislative Council, openly admitted the importation of cholera from India. 'We are indebted to India for our labour supply, and we obtain our cholera from the same sources...'174 Cholera was the most important single epidemic that caused a great change in the population of Ceylon in the 19th century, but it was '...never endemic in Ceylon, became a serious factor to be reckoned with only after the arrival of immigrants from India, who were imported in increasing numbers after the 1830's as labour for the newly opened coffee

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170 Van Den Driesen, I. H Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886, p. 197; makes reference to C.O. 54/ 235?/ 21st April 1847

171 CO: 57/ 176, 1909.

172 Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 109.

173 ibid., pp. 123-124.

174 Governor W. H. Gregory's Address at the Opening Session of Legislative Council, CO 57/70/1876-1877; For an excellent account on cholera and immigrant coolies: see Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/51/1870.

estates of Ceylon.'[175] After only a short period of time it caused exasperation then disappeared. 'Cholera, brought from India by the coolies more than once, threatened us, but seemingly the general condition of the country was not found congenial, and it went away.'[176] In the coastal areas where the Indian laborers disembarked and localities along the roads along which they walked all the way to the central hilly plantation areas were more susceptible to the spread of these diseases.[177] For example, Brodie says that cholera occasionally visited the Chilaw and Puttalam district.[178] Those who caught any kind of disease spread it into the hinterland and that happened with cholera as well. 'A number of coast people and others keeping boutiques along the road who immediately they get any sickness, go off into villages in the country and carry the contagion with them. Then again the road is open to traffic of all kinds along its length, and all these merchants mix with people along the road.'[179] The native had to pay with his life as a result of imported diseases. '... the South Indian labourers passing peacefully on their way from Talaimannar to the plantations in the Central Highlands. India at that time were notorious for epidemics like cholera, small-pox and malaria. These Indians carried with them the germs of those diseases which not only killed many of them on their way but also spread to the nearby villages and carried away the lives of hundreds of Sri Lankans.'[180]

In addition to the laborers, those who came to the island from India for business or other purposes and Ceylonese who visited India were the other possible means of importing the diseases. The contacts with India intensified with the development of internal and external trade under the British. 'On the first day of the year some alarm was caused by the occurrence of a fatal case of cholera in a dhony anchored off the customs jetty, which had arrived from India with a cargo of grain. This was followed by some sporadic cases in and about the town. It is supposed that several

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175 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* pp. 17-18

176 Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO. 57/54/1870.

177 Mendis, G C. *Ceylon under the British,* p 106

178 Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p. 37

179 Cholera Commission, p 90 Sessional paper 2 of 1867, Colombo, 1867, quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* p 18

180 Ameer Ali, A C M 'Rice and Irrigation in the 19th Century', *Ceylon Historical Journal,* vol xxv, nos 1-4, October 1978, p 257, makes reference to R W Levers *Manual of the North Central Province, Ceylon,* Colombo, 1899, pp 103-106

cases of a similar nature occurred in the villages, but were concealed, the patients having been persons who had recently returned from India'[181] It is estimated that 4,634 persons died from cholera during the years 1889 to 1895 [182]

Smallpox, as well as cholera, created much discontent in Ceylon during the British period. The usual practice in Ceylon before the British, was to segregate the smallpox patient in a jungle hut close to the village. If the epidemic was serious, the whole village was abandoned by those who were immune to the disease, leaving behind the patients.[183] The increasing intercourse with foreign nationals under the British, especially with Indian immigrants for the plantations, made the disease frequent in Ceylon. To arrest the situation four hospitals for the disease was were established by the British at the turn of the 19th century and vaccination was introduced.[184] Nevertheless, the disease continued its presence for quite a long period even after these early initiatives. '... small-pox also prevailed during the last half of the year to a great extent in Batticaloa. It was first of all introduced to Puliyantivu by a man of Jaffna, who came from Point Pedro by sea. While in the temporary hospital, and during probably the most dangerous stage of the disorder, this man escaped from the building by night and made his way to the bar, four miles away. Several of the cases that occurred were distinctly traced to his having communicated the disease to the patients. As the man died no punishment could be awarded to him for his deliberate attempt to spread the disease.[185] The administration report of northern province for the year 1884 admits that 'Small-pox introduced by a person who returned from India'[186] The disease now and then appeared among some members of the Muslim community due to aversion to vaccination. 'Small-pox was only occasionally reported, occurring chiefly among the Moors, but this might have been expected seen that vaccination has now become so universal that the Medical Department, though possessing a body of trained operators, finds only field for practice among the rising generation and Mohammedan villages where aversion is general.'[187] During the years 1889 to 1895, it is estimated that 5353 persons died from smallpox.[188] Only at the close of the 19th century, were quarantine

181 Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/93/1884.
182 Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British,* p. 106.
183 ibid., p. 27.
184 ibid., p. 27.
185 Administration Reports, Batticaloa District, CO: 57/76/1878.
186 Administration Reports, Northern Province, CO: 57/93/1884.
187 Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/66/1875.
188 Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British,* p.106.

camps organized and medical checkup s carried out in India among the immigrant laborers to prevent the outbreak of the disease in the island 189 The decline in mortality which took place in Ceylon during the modern period is due to the prevention of cholera and smallpox epidemics, reduction in the number of periodic famines, improvements in maternal and infant health care, and improvement of general health care and of hospital services 190

7.3.5 Popularization of Western Medicines

There were occasions in which colonial administration officials were in the habits of prescribing some western medications to the natives though they had not been qualified for that task They were the most senior and immediate British officials to the natives in their respective administration divisions The following is from the Matale district report of 1886 'I have been in the habit of carrying some simple drugs on circuit, and giving them to the people with instruction as to their use Fever powder are the most sought after, and much good has been done with sometime a medicine unknown to the vedaralas, in curing children suffering from worms a disease which causes many deaths from convulsions '191

As a remedy to the widely prevalent fever in the district 'A large quantities of fever powder have been distributed by the Assisting Government Agent' 192 Not only the administration officials but some of the native doctors got used to prescribe the western medicines to their patients In the Mannar district many of the native practitioners were prescribing quinine in fever cases 193 This practice of some of the native doctors would have been easier to popularize the western medicines among natives as they were much closer to the ordinary mass Over time, as a result of getting used to the western medications, natives seem to have developed among themselves that the interments used by western practitioners and the external appearance of the western medications have mysterious or miracle power than the traditional medicines The M O H's makes the following

189 ibid , pp 106-107

190 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* pp 299-300

191 Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/99/ 1886

192 Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/105/1888

193 Administration Report of the Government Agent for the Mannar Distinct, 1902, p 17, Colombo, 1903, quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* p 8

comments about the Colombo city mothers in his 1928 report. '... To them the glamour of white coat, a few surgical instruments and a large array of bottles with multi coloured fluids are the only things that appeal.'[194]
As a means of promoting the western treatments and also to improve the health conditions in the colony, the British administration initiated the Ceylon medical college. '... the Ceylon Medical College, founded by Sir Hercules Robinson in 1870, most heartily supported by his successor, Governor Gregory, and liberally endowed and extended by two wealthy Sinhalese gentlemen, Messrs. De Soysa and Rajapakse...'[195] In 1903 there were 75 hospitals and 511 dispensaries in the island and they were intended to provide treatment to the laborers in the plantations and the peasant in the rural areas and dwellers in the towns and steps were also take to medical and surgical work in the island conform with the latest development in the medical science.[196] One of the most success story in the British Ceylon was the medical department. 'In no direction has more satisfactory work been done in Ceylon by the British Government than through its Medical and Educational Departments.'[197] As a result of all the initiatives taken; the natives' medicine has relegated to the second place over time and the people were getting used with the western treatments. The'...number of those who take European treatment steadily increase, and there are now many private dispensaries from which European medicine are obtained...'[198] In 1920s govt. had assumed full responsibility for the maintenance of health services and a substantial of amount of the current expenditure was diverted for the purpose.[199] Health services in the island in Asian standard was advanced by 1939; there was roughly one hospital bed for every five hundred persons.[200] Under the European domination, especially under the British *Ayurveda* medical system was almost destroyed and lost traditional monarch patrons.[201] As in the case of western education western medicine also had a potent cultural effect as it spreaded into the countryside.[202] No people in the world as Sinhalese set a

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194 Administrative Report of the Municipal Council of Colombo, 1928, p.112, Colombo, 1929; quoted ibid., p.154.
195 Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903*, p.27.
196 Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p.102.
197 Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903*, p.26.
198 Administration Reports-vol. I, Western Province, CO: 57/161/1905.
199 Wiswa Warnapala, W. A. *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon*, p. 92.
200 Snodgrass, Donald R. *Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transition*, Richard D Irwin Inc., Homewood, Illinois, 1966, p.73.
201 Weerasooria, N. E. *Ceylon and Her People*, pp. 224-225.
202 Snodgrass, Donald R. *Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transition*, p.73.

higher value upon British medicines.[203] The Ayurveda system in the island was a part of the culture and the general belief was that it has suffered as a result of the popularity of western medicine which practically monopolized the government medical expenditure [204] The introduction of western medicine '... was a definite step forward; so also was the abandonment of the Government patronage to Ayurveda a definite step backward.'[205] One of the most important branch of south Asians knowledge wiped out by the western knowledge was Ayurveda [206] This was clearly visible in the British administration in Ceylon.

'Meanwhile, the island continues to add to its population- not at the earlier pace, but at the rate which is now one of the highest in the world. This accelerated growth is mainly attributable to a lowered death rate, ...'[207] 'Thus, while science and medicine have opened up new vistas of better health and living standards, they have against a background of adverse world developments, brought a serious economic challenge to the people and government of Ceylon.'[208]

7.3.6 Wholesome Water and Sanitation

The unavailability of wholesome drinking water seems to have been one of the major causes for diseases among natives. This was obvious in the drier parts of the island; particularly during the dry months of the year. 'When the tanks dried up and decayed, people dug holes in them and drank the muddy water. This was believed to be one of the main causes for disease called 'parangi' or 'Spanish Pox' (yaws).'[209] The reports written on district

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203 Roberts, Michael et al, *People Inbetween*, p 48

204 Wiswa Warnapala, W A. *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon*, p 242; makes reference to Wriggins, Howard, *Ceylon· Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton, N J, 1960, p 339

205 Weerasooria, N E *Ceylon and Her People*, p 225.

206 Goonatilake, Susantha *Crippled Minds· An Exploration into Colonial Culture*, Lake House Book Shop, Colombo, 1982, p 293, For an account on modern and ayurveda systems see ibid pp. 293-299

207 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1952, p 2

208 ibid , p 2

209 Ameer Ali, A C M 'Rice and Irrigation in the 19th Century', p 263; makes reference to C O 54/438 Loos' Report on the 'Depopulation of the Vanni District', enclosed in the separate dispatch of Hodgsson to Duke of Buckingham, 24 Dec. 1868, Sir W H Gregory *Autobiography*, second edition, London, 1894, p 307, C S Salmon *Crown Colonies-An Inquiry Into their Political Economy, Fiscal Systems and Trade*, A

level provide particulars about the drinking water. The following is from the Southern District of Hambantota. 'Undoubtedly the want of good water in many villages is the cause of diseases. The wells fail in long drought and the people are obliged to use the unwholesome water collected in holes dug in the dry beds of tanks.'210 A similar account is furnished about the North-Western Puttalam district. 'From Uppalawatta I rode to Sangattikulam a Moorish village. There is a tank in this village in fair order. ... There is still a small amount of water in the tank. There is no well in the village, and the people seem satisfied with the muddy buffalo-flavored water of the tank.'211 The story was the same in the Northern Mullaitive District. 'The water available for drinking purposes at Mullaitive is so wholly bad that I did not taste it a second time, and during my entire stay drank only water from green coconuts. To my mind, no other beverage in the world, either natural or artificial- not even champagne at its best-can equal, in refreshing deliciousness, the water of a half-ripe coconut fresh from the tree.'212 This deplorable condition remained into the 20th century as it was. 'The sanitary condition of the people is not satisfactory. Their means of living is opposed to the laws of health. They live in small, low, unventilated dwellings, have insufficient poor food to eat, bath and wash the cloth in the same water as drink. (the villagers prefer tank water to a well if there is one).213 The following comment is about the district of Mannar.

> 'Ignorance, the use of impure water, and a general disregard of sanitation seem to be responsible for most of the illness which occur. ... Ignorance as to matters of diet seem to be responsible for most of the infantile mortality caused by diarrhea and convulsions. The evils arising from the use of impure water for drinking purposes come hardly be over-estimated. After the rainy season the people take their drinking water from the pools and hollows where it has collected. This water is the drainage from surrounding plains and higher land and is invariable contaminated with the excreta of cattle and other animals...'214

Cobden Club Publication.

210 Administrative of the Government Agent, Hambantota district, 1908, p.19, Colombo, 1909; quoted in Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p.66.

211 Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/93/1884.

212 Hornandy, William T. *Two Years in the Jungle: The Experiences of a Hunter and Naturalist*, Regan Paul Trench & Co., London, 1885, pp. 272-273.

213 Administration Reports, Northern Province-Mullaitive, CO: 57/147/1901; quotes in Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 5.

214 Administration Reports, Mannar District, CO: 57/ 176/1909.

Both the wholesome water and wholesome food could have been furnished with the people living in the drier parts only through renovation and reconstruction of the dilapidated ancient irrigation system there '... the development and reconstruction of the irrigation work should be considered as one of the key factor responsible for the lowering of the mortality levels in the Ceylon dry zone in the period before malaria eradication and development of medical services.'215

In addition to the drier parts; scarcity of wholesome water was becoming a serious threat in the newly emerging urban localities in the island. The commercialization of the island created a number of new urban areas. In many of these settlements, if not all had no proper basic amenities especially for the quarters where poorer people lived. About the drinking water of the poorer classes in the city of Colombo in 1880's could be gauged from the city's first medical officer.

> 'In the country yard one frequently sees a dilapidated well with as a bad a privy not many feet distant from it Here, too, are cattle in the shape of cows, goats and pigs Whatever is drawn out of the well for drinking purposes by the demesnes of these rookeries by means of all manner of dirty vessels attached to strings or bits of rope equally filthy. Bathing, washing of foulest clothes, and watering of cattle are all carried on at the well, the protecting walls of which reveal several gaps from the falling out of the stones with which they were originally built To complete the picture, children in a state of nude are seen dotting the yard with human ordure.'216

The following account is about the drinking water facility in a big fishing village in the neighbourhood of Colombo city. 'The water in the wells in this village of Angulana is very low indeed, and also very impure. There is only one well which contains good water. In respect of the sanitation, or rather absence of sanitation, in this village I am not disposed to find much fault.'217 In some instances, although after elapsing a certain period, initiatives were taken to provide wholesome drinking water. The following is about the capital city of the island. 'The pollution of the soil and of the water was one of the factor which was responsible for the large number of epidemics in Colombo, and it was this problem which engaged in the

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215 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 88

216 The Sanitation in Colombo, Sessional paper 16 of 1907, Colombo, 1907, p.25; quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 124

217 Administration Reports, Diary Notes of an inspection tour of the Acting Government Agent, Western Province, CO 57/99/1886

attention of the municipal medical officers in their first attempts to provide more healthy and sanitary environment in the city. The first step in this direction was the provision of pipe-borne water supply to Colombo in 1887.'[218] The rural water supplies were surveyed in 1937/38 showed that 8,322 villages obtained drinking water from wells; 524 from springs; 514 from rivers and streams; 645 from tanks; 73 pipe born water.[219] And at the end of the 19th century initiatives were taken to keep the all small towns under boards of sanitation [220]

There are occasions in which administrative reports speak of non-hygienic life of the natives. One of them appears in the report of North-Western Province for the year 1867 Robert Knox principally lived nearly twenty years in this province and provided very good testimonies about the cleanliness of the natives (**see Chapter 4: *Health and Hygiene***) though it was pretty contrary to the following report.

> 'Every Demala Pattu Kandyan is especially liable to contagion from his personal uncleanness His underclothing is hardly ever washed, the same old dirty cloth does duty under all circumstances, even under a newly washed outer garment He seldom, if ever, has two changes of raiment at one time The pillow he places under his head has no cover, and is never washed I have seen the women scraping the dirt off it with a knife The mat he lies upon brown with dirt It is hardly strange that contagion diseases should be bred and fostered among so much filth '[221]

Reporter makes reference to the traditional male under wear called 'loin cloth'. Until quite recent, this was the only dress put on when a ordinary man was at work in the day time and it harmonized with the tropical warm climate. It is no more than a piece of brownish coarse cloth. After the daily routing work every one has a bath in the evening and change from loin cloth to another traditional cloth called sarong. It was the tradition of the native to apply medicinal oil or coconut oil on his scalp before retire to the mat spreaded on the floor. The mat is also made from brownish aquatic grass. The pillow is staffed with silk cotton and herbal plants. There are possibilities to turn the pillow into brownish colour within a couple of days after absorbing the medicinal oil. If the same pillow was used a

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218 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 130

219 Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 159

220 Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 103

221 Administration Report of the Government Agent for the North-Western Province, 1867, p 65, Colombo, 1868, quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p ??

considerable period of time it would be quite possible to accumulate oil sentiments on it.

The living huts of the poor people in certain drier districts of the island seem to be not built properly to protect them from the natural forces. The following is about a remote village in the north-central province. 'Konapatirawa. One of the worst swamps I have seen, and the sun never penetrates; moving them.'[222] A similar account is available from the another drier district of Trincomalee.

> ' Sinhalese are very careless about health They do not thatch their huts properly, and build them on low ground so as to be near their cultivated gardens For 4 to 5 months in the year in this flat low district these village site become water-logged, the clay floors absorb the dump, the chills, the fever, rheumatism etc result There is grimly empirical rule in this *pattu* that a hut must be abandon whenever two persons die in it one year As it is a collection of a few posts, wattle and daub, and straw, removal is easy '[223]

During the British periods general health conditions of the natives improved as a result of the spreading of western medical facility, lower human cost of famines due to importing and proper distribution of foods and general upward trend in hygienic practices with the spread of education. The falling death rate and growth of population was the consequences of all these changes. 'Fall in death rate led to a rapid growth of the population, a fact which resulted in an even greater dependence on foreign sources for food and other required imports, since the increase in demand generated by the growth of population was not harness to the domestic production of the required commodities.'[224]

7.3.7 Summary

No doubt that the widely application of the western medicine and fairly stable food supply kept the natives' health in remarkably good condition. The mass vaccination programs helped to bring the serious epidemics almost under control. This could be partly attributable to the general trend in the world as a

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222 Administration Reports, North-Central Province (diary extracts of 1916-17-18), CO 57/199/1918

223 Administrative of the Government Agent, Trincomalee district, 1915, p 15, Colombo, 1916, quote in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 88-89

224 Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 322

result of modern innovations and inventions; it was partly to the efficient British administration in the island. In addition the ordinary mass were not much conservative and they sought western treatments. The apparent result was the increasing population and its pressure on the limited agricultural lands. This was remarkably felt in the wet provinces where the natives had to share the limited supply of cultivable lands with plantations. Only a thinly scattered but increasing population, were living in the drier parts of the country; where cultivable lands were limited since most of the old artificial irrigation systems were in ruin and the people had to recourse on destructive shifting cultivation. Even in the wetter provinces land utilization was not on the long term sustainable lines. Neither these were on the priority list of the day. The expanding consumption needs of the increasing population were mostly met by imported goods.

There are no evidences to support that the western medicines were being produced in the country. The cinchona was cultivated for only a short spell of time as an exporter of raw material.225 It seems that some of the common eastern spices cultivated in the island might have exported as medicinal raw materials on negligible scale.226 Neither surgical instruments or other peripheral instruments were being produced in the country. It seems that no government supports were forthcoming during the period to up grade or to streamline the of traditional medical system.

In many localities in the drier districts natives had not access to the wholesome drinking water. The conditions became much serious during the dry months of the year. In most of the newly emerged urban localities had the same problem. The natives in the wetter districts had comparatively better hygienically life. In general health and hygienically conditions improved under the British.

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225 The cinchona bark has some valuable medicinal properties and this first became known to the Jesuit missionaries in South America It is also called Jesuit's bark or Peruvian bark and first introduced to Ceylon in 1861 see· Perera, Father S G . *A History of Ceylon II· The British Period and After 1796-1956*, p149

226 Among spices, cardamoms for example, was employed in pharmacopoeia as a medicine and neutralizer of taste. See: Whitaker, C.F 'Trade and Commerce', In Board of scholars(eds), p.82

8

Human Settlements and Shelters

8.1 Housings: *signs of a change*

8.1.1 General Remarks

The shelters of the natives varied according to region and social class during the period. In the past, society had been organized on caste lines and it was gradually transformed into a class-based system with the advance of capitalism. In the pre-colonial period the house of the ordinary native was no more than a hut and the restrictive feudal regulations did not allow him to build houses as he wished. (**see chapter 4: *Housing***). The urban houses and shanties became part of the island's dwellings during the British period. In addition, the estate 'barracks' or 'lines' became the shelter of immigrant laborers. This was a completely new feature added to native housing during the period.

8.1.2 Villages and Ordinary Houses

The human settlements deserve at least a simple treatment in any account of houses in Ceylon. From the remotest past, the native lived in settlements called villages.[1] 'Traditional Sinhalese society was grouped into villages...They were self-sufficient except for certain basic commodities such as salt, cloth and metal goods... These communities had little outside

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[1]The loose English equivalent for the Sinhalese term *gama* is 'village' meaning designated collection of land holdings, landed property or estate, see for a discussion on villages, Pieris, Ralph *Sinhalese Social Organization*, pp. 39-42 and De Lanerolle, Julius 'An Examination of Mr Codrington's Work on Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon', *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society(Ceylon)*, vol xxxiv, no 91, 1938, pp 211-213

contact; money was unknown.'[2] Like the Sinhalese, the Ceylon Tamils were predominantly villagers, while the majority of Moors lived in bazaars or close to seaports or to main roads. At the end of the colonial period, the village was still important and more than four-fifths of the population lived in villages.[3] There were often not more than a hundred inhabitants in a village and they lived on their ancestral lands, cultivating crops required for their subsistence.[4] The centuries-old tradition relating to village settlements was that, 'If the shareholders in a village increased so as to necessitate the building of new huts or homesteads, they were always allowed to enclose a piece of the common land, but not for any purpose besides *bona fide* residence.'[5] This tradition came under severe restrictions due to the land ordinances and the impact of plantation culture during the British period. The traditional village in the drier districts of the island differed somewhat from those in the wetter districts. The following report describes the average village in the north-central drier district, where the ancient civilization of the island was predominantly located. The'.. agriculture in the North-Central Province is mainly carried out on in small communities of peasant proprietors. These communities (*gan*, or villages, are the local description, consisting usually of a tank, a *gangoda*, a residential part, a *tisbamba*, cleared space, and *kumburuyaya*, range of paddy fields)'[6]

The villages in the wetter districts appear were contiguous each other. 'It is indeed difficult to define where one village finishes and another commences.'[7] This was the case even in the past when the island was under the native rulers. The physical limits of villages may not have been demarcated clearly, so that the casual visitor often found it difficult to distinguish one village from another, but the inhabitants were well aware of the village boundaries.[8] In the drier districts, it was some what easier to distinguish one village from another as each had its own artificial irrigation system.

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[2] Rajaratnam, S History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber, p 58

[3] Ryan, Bryce *Sinhalese Village*, p v

[4] Stockdale, F A 'Ceylon Agriculture', in Boards of Scholars(eds), p ?

[5] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO 57/54/1871, The oriental village in its pristine form remained well into the British period in Nuwarakalawiya See Coomaraswamy, Ananda K 'The Village Community and Modern Progress', pp 249-260

[6] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO 57/204/1921

[7] Sanderson, R F et al, *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p 42

[8] Pieris, Ralph *Sinhalese Social Organization*, p 39

In a traditional village or even in a traditional bazaar, huts or buildings were scattered over a considerable extent of land. 'Their villages and towns, instead of presenting that compact appearance to which we are accustomed, look more like a number of distinct houses scattered up and down in the midst of a thick wood or forest.'[9] A tradition seems to have been established among natives to consider that compact houses, if seldom ever seen, to consider them as one house rather than a number of separate housing units. Therefore, the village headmen often applied the term 'house' to a range of contiguous dwellings.[10] However, houses were built close to each other in isolated jungle villages for collective protection from wild animals. 'On emerging from the forest and approaching a village one finds a space of 200 yards of so cleared of undergrowth, with a cluster of huts huddled together in its midst. All over villages are surrounded by forest. The huts were originally huddled together for combined protection from elephants, the elephants being strictly preserved under native rule. In return the villagers were allowed a communal garden on the chena system, which they could preserve by combined watching from the elephants, as they preserved the closely clustered houses.'[11] The villages, for this reason, were sometimes surrounded by a deep ditch, as a protection against elephants.[12] The average village in Ceylon appears to have been somewhat different from in neighboring India. 'Villages in Ceylon are more attractive in appearance than those in India. The houses are less congested and being dotted among trees have a more attractive appearance than the bare walls and treeless narrow lanes typical of India.'[13]

When we examine the village dwellings, we find that there had always been a clear distinction between the house of ordinary man and his superiors under the native rulers In the Kandyan kingdom, for example, the house of the ordinary man was simply a hut and he had to abide by the rules and regulations imposed on his dwellings by the native king. 'The domestic architecture of Ceylon is of a most unassuming character, owing possibly in a great measure to legislation, as during the Kandyan monarchy the chiefs

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9 Percival, Robert *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 174.

10 Brodie, A Oswald Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya, p 136

11 Administration Reports, Vavuniya-Vilankulam District, CO: 57/105/1888.

12 Marshall, Henry, M D *Ceylon*, p. 19

13 Sanderson, R F. et al , *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p 42; We should not be misled, however, into thinking that the great geographical and social diversity of India would permit anyone to make simple comparison with small country like Ceylon

were only permitted to built or inhabit dwellings of one story in height; none save the chiefs and nobles were allowed to use tiles to roof their dwellings, while the mass of the people were compelled to thatched them, and plaited coconut leaves were then, and still are, generally used for the purpose.'[14]

The form of the ordinary man's dwelling seems to have become a tradition rather than a rule over time, so that there was not much desire among the ordinary people to build houses on modern lines, even under the British. The ordinary native seems to have been contented with what he had and it was also pretty compatible with his centuries-old, simple material wants. 'The comfort of a dwelling must be estimated by the supposed wants of the inhabitants. Judging by this standard, the people of Ceylon - and of Sabaragamuwa in particular - appear to be, as the saying is, pretty well-to-do in the world. Their wants are few...'[15] A similar account is furnished by Sirr, referring to the ordinary native houses in the middle of the 19th century. 'The abodes of the poorer classes are small huts, the walls of which are constructed of mud, which are plastered within and without with a peculiarly white clay - the floors are composed a mixture of cow dung and clay...'[16] The more westernized and economically important part of the island during the period was the wetter maritime districts. Hornandy held the following opinions about the external appearance of houses in a village close to the sea, near Panadura in the western province in the 1880s. 'I envy the lazy Sinhalese whose clean and tidy little huts nestle in the cool coconut groves, surrounded by the thrifty banana trees that are bowing down with weight of green fruit clusters. Looking through the forest of clean white cocoa-trunks, you get glimpses of the sea which make you eager for a better view...'[17] The following description is provided about the dwellings at Angulana, a fishing village at Moratuwa, in the same western province. 'The houses are neither small nor thickly crowded, and the space between them is free from dense vegetation, and open to the healthful influence of the sea-breeze.'[18] The living quarters of the drier district village in the 19th century are described in the following account. The '...huts of the shareholders hidden in the shade of their fruit trees, either under the bund [of the tank] or along the sides of the [paddy] field ...'[19]

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[14] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol. II, p. 273.

[15] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p. 50.

[16] Sirr, Henry Charles, *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, p. 273-274.

[17] Hornandy, William T. *Two Years in the Jungle*, p. 285.

[18] Administration Reports, Diary Notes of an inspection tour of the Acting Government Agent, Western Province, CO: 57/99/1886.

[19] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/54/1871.

The houses of the ordinary natives had not changed even in 1883; according to Ferguson, their living quarters were only huts.[20] 'In Sabaragamuwa the mode of building rooms to form the four sides of a small quadrangle, as in the Kandyan country, is not generally adopted; but the houses generally consist of three rooms side by side under one roof, with the *maduwa* or grain store, generally a shed open on one side, placed at right angles at one end.'[21] In general; there was a tendency among the ordinary people to build fairly comfortable and specious houses on modern lines, especially in the wetter districts, where the plantation had a direct impact. Ferguson could say at the beginning of the 20th century that 'Now people are far better housed, clothed, fed, educated and cared for every way.'[22] As a result, in the course of time, the number of tiled roof houses had multiplied.[23] 'There are numerous indications of the gradual adoption by Kandyans of a fuller and freer mode of life. The appearance in villages of brick houses with tilled roofs, in place of thatched cottages of mud and wattle...'[24] 'As regards the number of inhabited houses, in 1824 there were not more than 20,000 with tiled roofs, in the island; that number has multiplied manifold, but the 600,000 now given refer to all descriptions of inhabited houses, some of these being huts roofed with coconut leaves. The improvement in the residences of a very large proportion of the people is, however, very marked: and the contrast between the old and modern homes has been well described as being as great as that between a begrimed native chatty (clay-vessel) and a bright English tea-kettle.'[25]

When the country was preparing for political independence, the houses in an average village in the Western province provided a mixed picture of the changes brought about under the British. 'The structures are of wood, of pug, of matting or of brick, or even of palm leaves, while some are constructed of native bricks. Usually tiles are used for roofing, being shaped like earthenware pipes split in half. The tiles are laid across the roof

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[20] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1883. The Leading Crown Colony of the British Empire*, p 48

[21] Lewis, R E 'The Rural Economy of the Sinhalese', p 50.

[22] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing The Progress of the Island Since 1803*, p 86

[23] ibid , p 92

[24] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 349, makes reference to J P Lewis, Government agent, Central Province Quoted by Ridgeway - Administration p 143

[25] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p 22

like a series of rounded V's alternatively right side up and upside down The next layer continues the same alternation so that a series of troughs run down to the eaves with the edges covered by another series of upside down '[26] The tiles referred to here are now popular among the Ceylonese as Sinhalese tiles In the early years of political independence, the houses in a ordinary village of the Western province were described in this account 'Virtually every house has at least two distinctive "rooms," the veranda and the kitchen the latter, in the poorer homes, may be nothing more than a cadjan lean-to at the back of the house The kitchen is usually a dark and none too well kept part of the house, having little significance other than as a place for food preparation Cooking is done on an open fireplace or in poor homes, on small open fires over which brick support the cooking pots '[27] 'Some of the houses have a small kitchen adjoining, in which is the *lipa,* the hearth or cooking fireplace, but most Sinhalese housewives keep the open ground in front of the house clear of weeds and sweep it every morning, and they have little stick platforms - not unlike those built by Boy Scouts when out camping - in which to keep their cooking utensils '[28]

As a result of economic and social influences received during the period, not only the dwellings, but also the entire village showed some changes The development of communications after the plantations ' led to the growth of trade within the island and with foreign countries, and the village economy expanded into an international economy '[29] The modern village was born with the advent of greater external dependency at the end of British rule The following description is of a modern village in the western province at the time when the island's political independence was looming on the distant horizon 'The villages are occupied in their denser parts by the houses of artisans, craftsmen and shopkeepers, while the cultivators live in houses built upon their land '[30] The grip of the shopkeeper and the peddler increased in the village economy, while most of the traditional craftsmen and artisans lost their footholds The veranda of village shop began to provide additional free services to the people living around It had become the place where people listened to the radio, read newspapers, enjoyed the idle leisure hours and discussed important matters [31] In the

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[26] Sanderson, R F et al, *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p 42

[27] Ryan, Bryce *Sinhalese Village*, p 38

[28] Williams, Harry *Ceylon Pearl of the East,* p 162

[29] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 5

[30] Sanderson, R F et al , *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p 42

[31] Ryan, Bryce *Sinhalese Village*, pp 3-4, 7, The observations were based on a survey carried out in Pelpola village, close to the town of Kalutara in the Western Province

past, villagers used come to local rest house or *Ambalama(maduwa)* to spend their idle hours. Now the role of the local rest house has changed. 'The most villages have their *maduwa* , a shed erected as a resting-place for strangers travelling on the road to another village. Sometimes the *maduwa* is the property of the headman, who will clean it out and give it gay decorations if he knows that the village is about to receive a guest.'[32] In the passage of time, the village *ambalama* turned into the place where beggars and vagabonds rest. Nevertheless, few changes seems to have taken place of dwellings in the most remote corners in the island, even into the 20th century. 'Padikaramaduwa; a very remote and wretched village (full of children) four or five houses; all they have to live on is a little green kurakkan and a few vegetables.'[33]

8.1.3 Urban Dwellings

The urban and more importantly plantation dwellings became part of the island's settlements during the British administration. The former had only a limited role to play in the pre-British periods, but the latter was a completely new addition to the island with the expansion of commercial plantations. Urban life was not a familiar practice in the last native kingdom of Kandy and modern urban life was at first confined to a few maritime localities which underwent Portuguese and Dutch influences. Later on, under the British, some urban centers sprang up in the hinterlands, especially in the plantation districts. Historically, the towns in Ceylon had largely been a function of trade and commerce.[34] 'The growth of the other towns had been owing to either government policy or the operation of local urban forces especially dependent upon the plantation economy, consequently the pattern of growth is not continuous.'[35]

Galle was the major port city in Ceylon before it was replaced by Colombo. The following description is about its appearance in the middle

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during the period 1948-1952 The author maintained that he had studied villages and plantations in each of the major socio-cultural regions in the island.

[32] Williams, Harry. *Ceylon: Pearl of the East,* p.163; here *maduwa* should be similar to the *ambalama* or local resthouse.

[33] Administration Reports, North-Central Province (diary extracts of 1916-17-18), CO: 57 /199 /1918.

[34] ESCAP, *Population of Sri Lanka, Country monograph series,* no. 4, United Nations, New York,1976, p.76; quoted in Roberts, Michael et al, *People Inbetween,* vol.1, p. 100.

[35] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo· A Study in Urban Geography,* p. 143.

of the 19th century. 'The houses built on either sides of the streets, are but one storey in height - or to speak more correctly, consist merely of ground floors, and, to the best of our remembrance, there were but three residences at Galle that had an upper storey...The roofs are tiled...The roofs of all domiciles in Ceylon, whether tenanted by Europeans or Asiatic, slope outwards from the center walls ... space between the wall-plate and the tiles, for the admission of the air...The rooms are usually lofty and large .. doors and windows being alike left wide open, a white screen being placed before the former, to prevent the personal actions of the inmates being observed by all who choose to look...'[36] The port of Colombo eclipsed Galle during the British period. Similarly 'The port capital city, Colombo, eclipsed all the other port towns that thrived on commerce and trade.'[37] In addition to the commercial establishments, the city of Colombo consisted of several settlements and certain parts had especially been developed for the wealthy people. The neighborhood called 'cinnamon garden' was especially developed for the wealthy people. 'The opening out of the new and city suburb in the Cinnamon Gardens was effected with the liberal and of Government; out the crescents and streets which have been planned are already being build upon, and when occupied generally is the manner of some newly-erected villas in the some neighborhood, will render this situation the most attractive as well as ornamental of the metropolis.'[38] 'The city of Colombo, and the Cinnamon Gardens in particular, became one of the prime sites for symbolic display. The construction of palatial mansions with neat drive ways and gardens was just as much a part of this status competition as elegant dress, hansom cab or profligate wedding reception. These practices represented the extension of a principle, that of conspicuous consumption for symbolic purposes, that was firmly rooted in traditional Sinhala village practice.'[39]

New urban centers were built and the old developed to a new height in the plantation areas. The material change brought about in the plantation districts caused a number of towns to spring up like magic in the wilderness; some settlements became more than villages.[40] The following

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[36] Sirr, Henry Charles *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, vol I, pp 14-15

[37] ESCAP, *Population of Sri Lanka, Country monograph series*, no.4, United Nations, New York, 1976, p 76, quoted in Roberts, Michael et al, *People Inbetween* vol 1, p 100

[38] Administration Reports, Western Province, Colombo, CO 57/62/1873

[39] Roberts, Michael et al, *People In between*, vol 1, p 104

[40] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing The Progress of the Island Since 1803*, pp. 90-91.

description, seemingly from the beginning of the plantation industry in Ceylon, is of the central hilly town of Nuwara Eliya. 'The only buildings about thirty years ago were two rows of native huts, forming the bazaar at the entrance of the valley; the barracks in the smaller valley, a rest-house, a "cutchery" and court-house, a commissariat store, and a few scattered houses for the official residents and visitors in search of health. The houses, consisting of only the ground floor, were all made of wooden frames filled in with mud, plastered and whitewashed, and thatched with long grass, the walls covered with roses and creeping plants, and surrounded with gardens filled with English flowers and fruits. These with the carpeted rooms and fire-places, delighting and astonishing the new arrival with a pleasing picture of home in the midst of the tropical jungle.'[41] The climatic condition in Nuwara Eliya was much more English than that of other plantation cities, so that it had a natural attraction for the British. 'Nuwara Eliya should be supplied with all that is necessary to equip it as a mountain home for Europeans, as a sanatorium for those whose health has been deliberated by prolonged residence in the tropics, and for the rearing and education of young children. Much has already been done in this direction ... A good water supply has been secured; a railway has been commenced; a park is being laid out; a cricket ground, second to none in the Island ...'[42] In addition to the plantation districts, new towns arose in other parts of the island, mainly due to the development of communications and commerce. Nevertheless, the bulk of the natives were not familiar with urban life. The Sinhalese as a whole were very close to the soil, the life in a big city was an alien place to him and he worked in Colombo to live, but belonged to the village.[43] When the Japanese sent their bombers to Colombo in 1942, the Sinhalese fled back immediately to their villages except for a few of the westernized ones.[44]

8.1.4 Domiciles of the Wealthy

Most of the immigrant Europeans and the wealthy natives belonged to this category. The houses in which Europeans lived were all built in a form that was compatible with the hot tropical climate. 'The abodes of all Europeans in Ceylon bear a striking similitude to each other, the houses being

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41 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon,* pp. 4-5.

42 Administration Reports, Central Province, Nuwara-Eliya, CO:57/147/1901.

43 Williams, Harry. *Ceylon: Pearl of the East,* p. 176.

44 ibid., p. 176.

constructed upon the same plan; every door and every window alike open, and the portals of distinct apartments having moveable blinds placed midway in the frame-work. The dining-room usually extends the whole length of the dwelling, consequently the width of this apartment is generally disproportionate to the length; and in this hot climate, to enable the residents to partake of their meals in some degree of coolness, a punkah, nearly the length of apartment, is suspended from the ceiling over the dining-table.'[45]

The nobles and aristocrats had long lived in comparatively comfortable houses called Valavva. The traditional Valavva or manor house in the last native kingdom of Kandy was a mud-wattled structure with the roof tiled with hooked tiles *(koku ulu.)* It consisted of single storey buildings, with narrow doors, small windows and clay floors.[46] The higher class natives made revolutionary changes to the houses built during the period. They varied from the village headman to the Great Mudliar and to the wealthy natives who emerged during the period. House were built either in villages or in towns according to their taste and roots. 'The abodes of the chiefs and moodliars are built in gardens, and are in the form of a hollow square; the front and back of the dwelling being protected from the sun's rays by verandahs, which are supported by wooden pillars. The eating-room usually runs a across the wall width of the house, on either side of which are the smaller and sleeping apartments, which communicate one with the other. The domestic offices and servants' apartments being small detached buildings which are situated in the rear of the dwellings.'[47] The nobles and aristocrats built their houses in the style of the native architecture during the pre-European period. The centuries-old traditional architecture and its allied arts and crafts lost ground after the beginning of the British rule. Their place was taken by modern European architecture and imported materials. In the maritime provinces, the transformation had started during the Portuguese period in the sixteenth century. 'In the Kandyan districts the Sinhalese or Sinhalese-Hindu style of architecture prevailed until the end of the eighteenth century... at the end of that period a radical change set in, a change only comparable with that which took place in England and throughout Europe at the time of the 'Renaissance' when the beauty and restrained and classical style...which spelt the doom of Gothic architecture, a doom rendered irrevocable ... in Ceylon in one hundred, instead of the four hundred years it occupied in Europe; and it is therefore the easier here

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[45] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese,* Vol. I, p. 65.

[46] Pieris, Ralph. *Sinhalese Social Organization,* pp. 64-65.

[47] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese,* vol. II, p. 273.

both to realize the former life of men in simple times, and to measure the greatness of the change, of the very existence of which so many of us are nevertheless quite unconscious this Kandyan style having many obvious Hindu features but yet with a character all its own the stonemason and carpenter, the blacksmith and silversmith, the painter and potter, even the weaver combined to produce buildings of a lovely and harmonious character it has been again and again borne in upon me as the result of bitter experience both in the remotest villages and in Kandy itself, that the character of steady competency which once distinguished the Kandyan artist craftsman has gone for ever, a change such as the industrial revolution has brought about almost all over the world '[48]

The native assistants to the British administration and the wealthy classes which emerged with commercialization took the lead role in constructing new houses on European models 'There was the *mudaliyar* of the Hanvalla District who lived in a house which had been built in the pattern of houses occupied by Europeans in Colombo Forbes who encountered in the Hanvalla *mudaliyar* a Ceylonese imbued with sophisticated tastes and ideas has also described the Mahavalletenne *Adigar* whose house in Balangoda had not only been built in the European style but was replete with "European luxuries" Tennent, who evidently had come into contact with many *mudaliyars,* implied that the anglicisation had resulted in an interesting amalgam of Western influences with facets of the indigenous culture He described the houses belonging to the headman class as exhibiting "taste engrafted on Sinhalese Customs" Tennent's pleasing vignettes illustrating the *Mudaliyar* of Jeronis de Soysa who lived in Moratuwa, *Maha Mudaliyar* De Saram and the residence of Don Soloman Dias Bandaranayake, in Veyangoda, show the manner in which this class had been anglicised and were acceptable to the rulers '[49]

The winds of change were blowing in every corner of the island in varying degree The following is about a new house built in the North-Western Puttalam District 'This is the Ratemahatmaya's village, and the Ratemahatmaya himself has got a large brick and tiled "walawwa" recently built in the heart of the village The whole appearance of the village was well to do '[50] About a headman's house in a big fishing village in the western province 'The head man's house was very fine and better in fact

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[48] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K *An Open Letter to the Kandyan Chiefs*, Arts Council of Ceylon, 1957, pp 1 2

[49] Wickremeratne L A 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c 1900',p 179, author refers to Forbes, *op cit* II , p 156 and Tennet, *Ceylon* II, pp 142, 161 and 182

[50] Administration Reports, Puttalam District CO 57/93/1884

than the houses of most of our farmers in Australia.'[51] Well-to-do families have houses of five or six rooms; all were single storied buildings.[52]

Even at the end of the British administration, the majority of the people were living in small huts and these still more or less exhibited the old appearance, as well as being built with materials procured in the living environment as had been done for many centuries. However, quite a large number of new houses were built on modern lines during the period. Traditional architecture had gone for ever, paving the way for new tastes and social needs. 'Of private houses, walawwas and smaller houses of the old sort, with their beautiful massive doors, and stout adze-cut timbers, fewer and fewer survive each year; even if their owners feel their old homes unsuited to their present needs, may not a few of these be preserved to tell their children's children how men lived and wrought in the old days before progress and commerce changed the very face of the earth.?'[53]

8.1.5 Summary

The traditional limits and restrictions against the building of houses withered away during the British administration. However, the majority of the ordinary people still lived in huts even at the end of the British period. Some of them started to build modern and spacious houses during the period and this trend was obviously visible in the districts where the plantation culture was physically present and the western influence was much in evidence. As in the past; the people belonging to the higher classes built larger and more comfortable house in western-style architecture.

8.2 Household Utensils: *new items, new fashions*

8.2.1 General Remarks

Since antiquity the ordinary people of the island equipped their homes with the bare minimum of necessary utensils to keep life going without too

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51 Sanderson, R. F et al, *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p. 43.

52 Ryan, Bryce. *Sinhalese Village*, p. 37.

53 Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *An Open Letter to the Kandyan Chiefs*, p. 7. Ratnapura Katchcheri and the surrounding old buildings is a good illustration of the beauty of traditional Sinhalese architecture; see Cook, Elsie K . *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev.) K. Kularatnam, Macmillan, London, 1953, p. 51 (Fig. 14).

many difficulties. Furniture in the modern sense was virtually unknown to them. However, they seem to have felt that what they had was neither inferior nor uncomfortable. The monarchs and the social elite had a fairly good or perhaps very comfortable way of life in their elegantly furnished houses with most of necessary luxuries of the day. But it was not the ideal life style to be emulated by the ordinary natives. Above all, the ordinary natives were prohibited from following many aspects of their betters' life style.

8.2.2 Furniture and Other Articles

At the beginning of the British period the average homes seem to have been furnished household utensils similar to those in the past (**see Chapter 4: *Household Utensils***)

> That of the cottages is in the last stage of simplicity, and consists merely of the indispensable instruments for preparing their victuals. A few earthen pots to cook their rice, and one or two brass basins out of which to eat it, a wooden pestle and mortar for grinding it, with a flat stone on which to pound pepper, turmeric, and chilies for their curries; a *hiromeny*, a kind of grater, which is an iron instrument like the rowel of a spur fixed on a piece of wood like a boot-jack, and used to rasp their coca-nuts.. '[54]

Furniture appears to have not been an important consumer article in the traditional average house in Ceylon. 'Round the walls of their houses are small banks or benches of clay, designed to sit or sleep on. The benches as well as the floors of their houses are all laid over with cow-dung, to keep away vermin, and to preserve their surface smooth, and not so easily rendered dirty by rain as if it were of clay. ...sumptuous furniture is not to be expected even in the best houses.'[55] The natives appear to have partaken their meals with their fingers sitting on the floor of their houses 'They use neither tables, chairs, nor spoons; but like other Indians, place themselves on the ground, and eat their food with their hands.'[56] The Indians scarcely used furniture in the past, though chairs and thrones were familiar to them; they were used only by kings; others sat on low stools or on the floor according to their rank.[57]

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[54] Percival, Robert . *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p 173

[55] ibid., p 173

[56] ibid , pp. 173-174

[57] For an elaborated discussion on rolfings, wooden architecture, fishing boats, cars and

Not only the traditional houses, but the rest houses, especially built for the European travelers at frequent intervals along major roads, were not been supplied with furniture in the early days. The following account describes such a situation in which some Britons patronized a restaurant on their way to *Sripada* or Adam's Peak

> ' the humble rest-house On procuring the owner we entered with the resolution of men determined to enjoy themselves The very click of the clock, as we stood in the verandah before the opening of the door, sounded pleasantly in our ears, but imagine our reminiscences when, on entering, we perceived not a single article of furniture in the room into which we were first introduced The second, however, was better There were a sofa with bamboo bottom, which appeared to be neither of the newest shape nor of the strongest character, a chair with bottom to match, and another without necessary appendage at all, together with a table beautifully balanced upon three legs This was luxury One stretched himself upon the sofa, which, after a little premonitory creaking, gave way in the middle, while the other throwing himself upon the chair, attempted to rest his legs upon the table This duty that venerable piece of furniture disdained and came down accordingly '[58]

Rest house buildings in Ceylon were '.. similar to Indian Choultries Shelter is all that is to be obtained in many of them; some have bedsteads, a few chairs and tables...'[59] This was equally common to the European countries until the middle of the sixteenth century. 'Time was, even in Europe, when the only provision for sitting inside a house was a bricked ledge built alongside the wall. The only seats were "thrones" or "state-seats" for great personages. Chairs apparently did not come into general use or become articles of ordinary domestic furniture in Europe until after the middle of the sixteenth century.'[60]

'The carpenter's craft has come down from ancient times though much of the old tools and techniques are not used today.'[61] It was Europeans who introduced modern carpentry and the furniture to the island and their common use in society. 'We owe it to the Portuguese that such articles of furniture as benches, tables, chairs, screens, bedsteads and wardrobes were introduced into, and came to be put to common use in Ceylon.'[62] The

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chariots see Coomaraswamy, Ananda K *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon,* p 161-171

[58] Knighton, William *The History of Ceylon,* p 390

[59] A Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon,* pp 1-2

[60] Brohier, R L *Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon,* National Museums of Ceylon, 1969, p 7

[61] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon,* p 162

[62] Brohier, R L *Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon,* p xi

making of modern furniture in the island started in the maritime provinces, from where the tradition passed into the interior provinces From the Dutch period Moratuwa was famous for its carpentry work 'It was from the Dutch that the "Moratuwa Carpenter" and the Low-country Sinhalese generally learnt the art of furniture-making and even up to the British period of occupation of Ceylon duplicated the genuine Dutch models and preserved many of the Dutch patterns.'[63] At the beginning of the 20th century it had become the chief minor industry in the most commercialized province of the island

> There are many minor industries in the province of which carpentry is the chief The principal centre is Moratuwa, which export furniture and other article in large quantities Moratuwa carpentry is famous all over the Island not only so, but many enterprising Moratuwa carpenters are to be found working on estates throughout the planting districts If the agricultural classes would only emulate the perseverance and industry of their artisan brethren, native agriculture would soon take a higher place. Moratuwa, however, is by no means the only place in which carpentry flourishes There are no less than 898 Carpenter's shops and 76 carriage and cart factories in the Colombo District, and 375 of the former and 19 of the latter in the Kalutara District '[64]

The Moratuwa carpenter seems to have provided his services to the interior provinces in the early years of the British rule. However, over time, people in those provinces appear to have mastered the art. 'There is an increase in local carpentry works. The people are becoming less dependent on the immigrants from Moratuwa and elsewhere, though they hardly yet compete successfully against them.'[65] Carpentry was also taught in some schools in the Matale District [66] In some remote districts, carpenters were not easily accessible even at the turn of the 20th century. 'Trade do not flourish, and there will soon be good openings in this district for Sinhalese carpenters. It is with the greatest difficulty that one can get the simplest bit of carpenter's or blacksmith's work done.'[67] Nonetheless, traditional wood carving was carried out in a village of the same district. 'Wood-carving, an almost extinct art among the Kandyans, is carried on at Kudakachchakodiya.'[68] A similar craft was practised in the Hambantota district. 'Brasswork and Fancy furniture, painted in a particular way resembling lacquer could be

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[63] ibid , p xiii
[64] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO 57/170/1907
[65] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/204/1921
[66] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/204/1921
[67] Administration Reports - vol 1, Mullaitive District, CO 57/157/1904
[68] Administration Reports, Mullaitive District, CO 57/176/1909

found principally around Tangalle.'[69] The dispersion of carpentry in the countryside provides a good indication of the spread of the use of furniture.

In the mid-19th century, the natives in Colombo were using tables and chairs for partaking of meals. 'Instead of sitting cross-legged on mats at their meals, they [the people of Colombo] now use chairs and tables...'[70] At the beginning of the 20th century, furniture was becoming more common, even in the old Kandyan provinces. 'More furniture too is to be found in the majority of village houses than a few years back, and chairs and tables are as necessary as plates and cups for domestic comfort...'[71]

With the expansion of modern carpentry, traditional wood carving and most of the other crafts were declining in the island.

> 'Many beautiful specimens of carvings in wood are to be found in Ceylon, and the artisans of Galle are peculiarly expert in this branch of art; ebony chairs, couches, and jewel-caskets, are most elaborately and deeply carved, and the designs, which in many instances consist of fruits and flowers, are bold and excellent. ... Like all else in Ceylon, the art of carving in wood is fast falling into decay, and now we never find executed by modern artists, the same exquisite description of delicate tracery, which is to be seen upon the wooden pillars, supporting the roof of the audience Hall of the former Kandyan monarchs...'[72]

By the end of the British period some furniture and other articles had been added to the ordinary homes. 'Each house will have at least a table and usually one or two wooden chairs, and a large box in which are kept a few dishes and often good clothing.'[73] 'Odd pieces of modern furniture find a place practically in every home however poor it may be.'[74] The rich family had more luxurious household utensils than the ordinary people. 'Richer homes may have "almirah," the large wooden wardrobe of European origin, and the wealthy have European style parlor furniture.'[75] Only in the houses belonging to very well-to-do people was there much furniture and a

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[69] Administration Reports, Hambantota District, CO: 57/105/1888.

[70] Barrow, Sir George. *Ceylon: Past and Present*, John Murray, London, 1857, p. 88.

[71] Administration Reports - vol. I, Central Province, CO: 57/161/1905.

[72] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, p. 266; He refers to a special kind of tree leaves used by the natives for carpentry work. 'We regret that we are unable to give the reader the name of a tree which grows in Ceylon, whose leaves, owing to their roughness, are constantly used by native carpenters instead of sand-paper; they have also the property of extracting stains from furniture...' see: ibid. p. 168.

[73] Ryan, Bryce. *Sinhalese Village*, p. 37.

[74] Wijesekere, N. D *The People of Ceylon*, p. 125.

[75] Ryan, Bryce. *Sinhalese Village*, p. 37.

differentiated use of rooms following the European pattern [76] The diversion to foreign articles seems to have been expedited in the later stages 'Foreign markets have introduced new fashions along with new utensils Heavy competition has driven out the local made objects Homes even in the remotest corners of the dry-zone will proudly display a china cup, glass tumbler and aluminium vessel or some such object The one object that every one possesses and has actually become a household article is the electric torch which even the Veddas possesses '[77] 'A time was when copper and brass vessels and objects had a place practically in every home Every object of daily use was made of brass and was used up to very recent times when imported glass and aluminium were superseded them '[78]

8.2.3 Summary

In general, the natives were not used to having furniture and many utensils in their homes before the British administration This even applied to the rest-houses which were especially built for the European travelers in the island Modern carpentry was introduced by the Europeans, though the island had its own carpentry system for centuries

Furniture was became more common among the natives during the period For the production of furniture, local materials and craftsmanship were mostly employed However, there was no long-term sustainable scheme for the maintaining the wood supply to meet the accelerating consumption of furniture Most of the new household utensils came from foreign sources, exerting little or no pressure on local resources The traditional pottery production kept a considerable output throughout the period as it had in the past

8.3 Lighting and Cleaning Substances: *from garden to market*

8.3.1 General Remarks

As in many other ancient civilizations, the Ceylonese had their own methods of lighting and using detergents These were mostly procured from their living environment For lighting purposes, many kinds of vegetable

[76] ibid , p 37
[77] Wijesekere, N D *The People of Ceylon* p 126
[78] ibid , p 125

oil were used and wood for cooking purposes. Cleaning substances were obtained from plants and berries. All these were quite adequate for the old world standards. Modern substitutes were introduced during the British period, forcing out the traditional substances.

8.3.2 Fossil Fuels for Vegetable Oil

Among the varieties of vegetable oil, cinnamon oil was used for the purpose of lighting in the island (**see Chapter 4: *Lighting and Detergents***) Candles were being made from cinnamon oil and enormously large tapers made from cinnamon wax were found by the British soldiers in the Kandyan palace.[79] However, there is no evidence that the ordinary people used candles under the native kings.

As in the past, vegetable oil was still widely used, even in middle of the 19th century, for lighting purposes. The following describes a wedding ceremony held at a wealthy, high caste native's house in a maritime province. The '...room itself was brilliantly illuminated by numerous lamps suspended from the ceiling, and, as they were supplied with coco-nut oil, the effluvium was most overpowering.'[80] This was still true in 1880s. Haeckel makes the following remarks on his stay in the Beligam rest house close to Mirissa in Southern Ceylon. 'When my simple dinner was over, I made it a rule to take a short evening walk on the deserted shore or in the palm groves, illuminated by thousands of fire-flies and glow-worms; then I made a few notes, or tried to read by the light of a lamp burning coconut oil; but generally I was so over powered by fatigue, that by nine o'clock I was glad to go to bed, after carefully shaking my night things, as I had my clothes in the morning, to turn out intruding scorpions or centipedes.'[81] Referring to a few of his visitors, Haeckel makes the following comment. '...I was much startled when the flickering light of a coca-nut oil lamp fell on four witches' faces, each more wrinkled and hideous than the last.'[82]

Over time, the place of local vegetable oil was taken over by imported candles and kerosene oil. Candles seems to have been used in the transitional period from vegetable oil to kerosene oil. '...We find that *candles* give an increased value of 15,895 rupees and 95 cents, which is

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[79] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. I, pp. 62-63.
[80] ibid., p. 180.
[81] Haeckel, Ernst. 'A Visit to Ceylon', Clara Bell(trans.), *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd., Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1975, p. 158.
[82] ibid., p. 165.

large upon an article of this description. Probably greater quantities are used in the interior, as the introduction of gas to private houses should decrease the quantity consumed in Colombo.'[83] In addition, candles and soap were made from coconut oil.[84] With the popularization of kerosene and, to a certain extent, gas, candle consumption declined. '*Candles*- There is a decrease in value of 28,178 rupees on this article, owing to a larger consumption of gas and kerosene oil. The importation as to latter shews an increase of 45,773 rupees.'[85] However, the consumption of gas seems not to have been significant among natives during the period.

One of the reasons given for the popularity of kerosene consumption was that it was cheaper than the locally made vegetable oil. 'Kerosene oil, exceeding 5 lacs, and showing increasing ... points to the steadily extending use of this luminant in the stead of the more expensive vegetable oils of local production.'[86] Kerosene oil was now in more common use than a few years back.[87] 'The conveyance of kerosene oil in tins continues to steadily increase. Of the quantity carried during the year, Colombo and Wharf alone show an excess of nearly 1,000 tons over the previous year.'[88] The volume of imports and the amount spent on them gradually increased. 'The average annual value of kerosene oil imported increased from Rs. 191,005 in the period 1883-85 to Rs. 653,027 in the period 1890-92, and the import of matches increased from an annual average value of Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 59,000 between 1883-87 and 1888-92.'[89] 'Kerosene - In 1922, over 7 million gallons were imported ... petro-imports have increased steadily.'[90]

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[83] Administration Reports, Report upon the Trade and Commerce of the Island of Ceylon for 1873, As compared with 1872 , CO: 57/62/1873.

[84] Sitt, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. 1, p. 154; Coconut oil was being used in Europe to make candles, soap, for dressing clothes and also for lighting purposes and as a lubricator. See Ferguson, John . *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p. 50.

[85] Administration reports, Memorandum on the Customs Revenue Returns for 1877, CO: 57/73/1877.

[86] Governor Sir J. West Ridgeway's address to the Legislative Council of Ceylon during the Session of 1901, CO: 57/147/1901; Kerosene seems not have been cheap to the native even in the early independent periods. See for example: Ryan, Bryce. *Sinhalese Village*, p. 39.

[87] Administration Reports - vol. I, Central Province, CO: 57/161/1905.

[88] Administration Report, Report of the General Manager - Railway, CO: 57/201/1920.

[89] Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p.148; for the statistics, author makes reference to Ameer Ali, A. C. L. Peasant Agriculture in Ceylon, 1833-1893 (London School of Economics, unpublished M.Phil dissertation in Economic History, 1970) pp. 188-94.

[90] Whitaker, C.F. 'Trade and Commerce', p. 84.

Kerosene became popular even in the remote localities in the island. 'Kerosene oil now largely consumed, has risen slightly.'[91]

Modern consumer articles normally come to the market with new accessories and technology. Though the service provided by new consumer articles is apparently a substitute in one way or another for old consumer articles, there is a unbridgeable incompatibility between the accessories of old and new consumer articles. Kerosene as a cheap and superior substitute to the traditional vegetable oil came with factory-made lanterns. Hitherto, lamps for traditional oil were made by the local craftsmen. Elegant traditional lamps might have been used in monasteries and houses of high ranking natives. References are made to shallow oil lamps used in temples in different shapes and forms.[92] Simple natives seem to have used home-made lamps for ordinary purposes and craftsmen or factory-made lamps for special occasions. Nevertheless, aristocrats, nobles, well-to-do people and, later, commercial establishments and public institutions appear never to have used simple, home-made lanterns. Religious and secular ceremonies were originally illuminated with vegetable oil and, later on, first with kerosene and then with gas lamps. In addition to lighting, kerosene and gas were used as fuel for cooking purposes, presumably by a lower percentage of natives, instead of traditional firewood. Bandarage maintains that the use of kerosene oil spread rapidly among the natives during the nineteenth century and it became a popular substitute for coconut oil.[93] However, it may be safely concluded that kerosene became more popular among natives at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

It might be true that kerosene oil was cheaper than the traditional vegetable oil as a lighting substance. The native used to make his own lighting oil from kekuna, mee, gingerly and coconut. After the introduction of kerosene some of these, especially kekuna and mee lost ground. No more oil was made from them, except for a negligible amount for indigenous medicinal purposes. In 1930s large quantities of *mee (Bassia longifolia)* seeds were being sent to Jaffna from the north central, eastern and northern provinces to be pressed for cooking oil and oil for medicinal purposes; in addition seeds were produced in certain parts of Kurunegala district.[94] No reference is made to the use of this oil for lighting purposes.

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[91] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO 57/143/1900

[92] Coomaraswamy, Ananda K *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon,* p 141

[93] Bandarage, Asoka Colonialism in Sri Lanka, Lake House Investment Ltd , Colombo, 1985, p 185

[94] Child, Reginald 'Report on the Soap Industry in Ceylon', *The Coconut Research Scheme (Ceylon),* Bulletin No 1, Nov 1934, pp 11-12

Sesame oil seems also to have lost ground as a lighting substance. A survey in Kandy district suggests that about 25,000 bottles of Kekuna oil were available in a season.[95] It appears that no part in the island used Kekuna oil for lighting purposes in the 1930s. Cinnamon oil had to meet the same fate. Only a negligible quantity of coconut oil might have been used in some isolated localities in the island. This meant that no production flows were generated within the system; consumption was directed to another source. The net pressure on local resources, if it had been calculated, would no doubt have been minus.

8.3.3 Cleaning Substances

The Ceylonese traditionally used several kinds of local substances for cleaning purposes. Soap or other modern detergents were not in use. During the British period, the traditional items were replaced by the modern cleaning substances. Among all of them, soap was the most important single article. The average annual value of imported laundry soap into Ceylon during the period 1924-1932 was around Rs. 1,511,200, the corresponding value of toilet and medicated soap was Rs. 657,850 and the per capita soap consumption, both imported and locally produced, for the year 1933 was 1.8 lb, while the corresponding figures in Great Britain and U.S.A. were 20 pounds and 24 pounds, respectively.[96] Although important raw materials were domestically available for soap production, appreciable quantities were not produced in the island. The local soap industry was quite capable of producing cheaply a reasonably good household soap in sufficient qualities, a moderate increase in import duties would probably have had a good effect.[97] The traditional practice of applying coconut and medicinal oil to the scalp seems to have continued, while a sign of a new trend was a switch from the traditional herbal head cleaners to shampoo. 'Oil derived from the "King" coconut or "tembili" varieties of coconut, have long been favoured as hair oils, and shampoos are made and sold locally by saponifying the oil with potash.'[98] 'Certain herbs, pastes and compounds are used for rubbing the body and washing the hair. It is believed that some of these ingredients improve the skin-colour and infuse a fragrance. Of these

[95] Child, Reginald. 'Report on the Soap Industry in Ceylon', *The Coconut Research Scheme (Ceylon)*, Bulletin No 1, Nov. 1934, p. 12.
[96] ibid., pp. 29-30.
[97] ibid., p. 43.
[98] ibid , p. 8.

sandal-wood paste and *kokum*-bark, cool the body and enhance the beauty, boiled lemon and or *nelli* clearances the head and promotes the growth of hair.'[99]

8.3.4 Summary

The natives of the island were using coconut, sesame, cinnamon and other varieties of oil for lighting purposes until the late 19th century. Subsequently, these oils were replaced by candles and kerosene. The former was used during the transitional period from the traditional substances to kerosene. The traditional cleaning substances were similarly replaced by soap and shampoo.

[99] Wijesekere, N. D. *The People of Ceylon*, p. 120.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

9

Conclusions: *Changes in Consumption Pattern and Economic Underdevelopment in Ceylon*

PART I

9.1 Introduction

The central theme of the thesis is changes in consumption pattern and economic underdevelopment. The discussion has extended over two major areas. One area comprises the discussion of the literature on economic development, consumption and the formulation of an alternative theory. The other is an examination of the historical evidence to test the alternative theory. The empirical work is concentrated mainly around the British colonial period in Ceylon, although some attention has been paid to pre-British Ceylon and to other nations. The time period covered by the case study roughly runs through one hundred years starting from the 1840s. This is a quite long period and sufficient to bring about structural changes in the whole socio-economic fabric of any country under a foreign occupation. This time period naturally relates to the long-term macroeconomic analysis. The short run is usually taken to cover a period of one to three years in macroeconomic policies.[1] Macroeconomic planning, in many instances, covers five to ten years. However, the degree of transformation of a society does not depend essentially upon the time factor, but on the nature of resistance to or co-operation with changes. The period of our investigation is a transitory epoch in world history as a whole. Some of the salient features of the modern world economy and the nation states have their roots

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[1] Cook, Paul and Kirkpatrick, Colin, *Macroeconomics for Developing Countries*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1990, p.1.

in this period,[2] so that, in general, it would be possible to bring far-reaching changes to a nation which has been a part and parcel of the changing world.

A wider area has been discussed, although not in detail, in Chapter Four with reference to the pre-British periods in order to impart a whole, but generalised, picture of the traditional or native socio-economic structure which had been in the island for centuries. This entire period could be considered as one stage or one point in history in our analysis. The investigation of the British period is detailed and provides information on many aspects of a few selected topics on consumption. This can be considered as an investigation into the transitional stage of the island's history from the pre capitalism to the capitalism from the perspective of consumption. It is also another stage or point in history in our analysis. At the beginning of political independence, the island had a socio-economic structure which had been produced by the long colonial transformation. All these three scenarios can be employed, when and where necessary, for our conclusions.

The conclusions drawn in this chapter are complementary to the discussion in Chapter Three in which our alternative theoretical framework was formulated. The colonial experience of Ceylon, which was examined in the third part of the thesis, and the experiences of other countries are highlighted here to support our arguments. The conclusions in this chapter could therefore be regarded in one sense as a further elaboration of Chapter Three, giving special emphasis to the experience of Ceylon.

9.2 Limitations of the Conclusions

Consumption is not completely independent of production, supply, income and technological changes. It also has an undeniable link with the cultural and social milieus. As economic history has shown, economic growth and development are not a single, universal and one-dimensional process. The experiences of development are unique to each country. Even within this diversified, complicated and complex trajectory, one can draw generalised contours or patterns of economic development in the light of these same unique historical experiences.

To draw more concrete conclusions, even within an abstract, purely economic approach, it is necessary to examine all the major macroeconomic phenomena of an economy, which is obviously beyond the

[2] We do not want to enter into the debate here about whether there are any nation states in the world now under the current globalisation drive.

scope of this type of limited exercise. However, even within a selected area of study, such as consumption, quantitative exercises are essential for reaching more satisfactory conclusions. Moreover, the theoretical framework which we have applied here should be further refined and qualified with the help of sufficient historical evidences from a number of former colonies, as well as from colonising nations and countries that were not colonies.

The living conditions and economic performance of a nation do not only depend on household consumer behaviour, which we have emphasised in our study. They are also partly related to the consumption patterns of public sector and firms/ institutions. More importantly, the provisions for public welfare, health and education are made by governments and local authorities, although the final consumers are from the household sector. In order to draw more satisfactory conclusions, non-household consumption expenditure has to be investigated sufficiently, but this is also not within our scope at this stage.

In addition, the social welfare and economic development of a nation are not only a function of the consumption of goods and services. Human satisfaction or dissatisfaction is not wholly a function of material wellbeing. Frustration, distress, anxiety, feelings of insecurity and similar psychological elements would either emerge from or be submerged by material progress. All the benefits and costs of economic growth are not reflected in traditional measurements of the national product and consumption. Many external economies and diseconomies of economic growth, although highly relevant to the quality of life, are not included in these measurements.[3] We too have adhered to the existing tradition to a great extent. However, the economic impacts of the consumption of intoxicants and alcohol and environmental degradation have also been touched upon here.

The country of our case study belongs to the category of small economies. Its physical size is roughly equal to that of the Netherlands and Belgium together or to Ireland. The size of the market, economic and other resources does not compare with that of a larger country.

Plantation agriculture and allied activities which were introduced to the island during the colonial period are here called the modern sector of the economy, while the continuation of the old subsistence economy and its related activities are referred to as the traditional sector. This usage has nothing to do with the hypothesis of economic dualism, but has been adopted only for the convenience of our discussion.

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[3] Ho, Samuel P.S. *Economic Development of Taiwan, 1860-1970,* pp. 229-230.

9.3 Food and Clothing

In our conclusions; we have given much attention to the consumption of food and clothing. There are some good reasons for this. These two sectors were the vital segment in the pre-colonial subsistence economy with a potential to trigger economic growth on modern lines. In the colonial economy, the lion's share of import expenditure concentrated on these two items. The majority of the natives had been engaged in food and clothing sectors since time immemorial. In addition, the economic history of developed countries testifies to the importance of the food and clothing in their initial stage of economic growth. The traditional sector of the economy of Ceylon could have kept pace with the expansion of the modern plantation if the consumption of food and clothing had remained within the island and expanded the market for local production. Referring to the weaknesses of Ceylon's economy at the beginning of the political independent, Das Gupta could say: 'Obviously much of this weakness would disappear if the economy could produce more of its own essential requirements, particularly of food and clothing.'[4]

Food sector: The island's economy in the pre-British period had been centred around subsistence agriculture. The prized food of the native was rice, although a number of dry grains were cultivated as complementary to rice **(see Chapter 4)**. In addition, yams and vegetables were grown and consumed. Rice production has always received government support, mainly through artificial irrigation facilities. The resource allocation of the society was mainly concentrated on grain cultivation. All most every one in the society was directly involved in grain and other food production. The ability to produce surplus food, especially rice, was the factor that ultimately decided the prosperity of the island. Agriculture was again both the strongest and the weakest element in the economy of British Ceylon. Now it was not subsistence agriculture, but export-oriented plantation agriculture. It became the centre of gravity of the colonial economy of the island.

> 'During the nineteenth century, the dependence on a handful of products with a high export potential, was by far the dominant feature in the economy of Ceylon. Its survival throughout the period under review was, as events showed, both a source of strength and weakness.'[5]

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[4] Das Gupta, B. B. *Economic Conditions in Ceylon in 1949*, Department of Information, Ceylon, 1950, p 2.

[5] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Economic Development in the Plantation Sector c. 1900-1947',

On the one hand, plantation agriculture came to the top of the economy during the period, transforming the medieval economy into a modern one while, on the other hand, the traditional subsistence agriculture was relegated to a much lower position from the pinnacle of its history. The entire prosperity of the island was centred on the export of a few commodities which had a elastic demand in the world market. Most of the economic eggs of Ceylon were in a very few baskets and the fortune of a few agricultural export commodities in world markets had become the most important single determinant of the island's material wellbeing.[6]

The import of consumer, intermediate and capital goods was financed by the exports of plantation products. The weakest point of the economy was that almost all the essentials, including foodstuffs, became a function of the export earnings. At political independence, 90% of the island's exports were plantation products. The weakness of the economy was the wide fluctuation of these major export earnings. The greater volume of imports were food and clothing for the poor.[7] This was a fragile situation, with export earnings fluctuating according to the world market demand and supply. Import expenditure, on the contrary, could not be adjusted according to the fluctuation in export earnings. Instead in the long run, it increased in parallel with the shifting of preference to foreign goods, the demand for new consumer goods and the growing population. It was a sort of a 'ratchet effect' in macro level as explained by Duesenberry (see **Chapter 2: *Relative Income Hypothesis***). The ratchet kept expenditure on imported consumer articles at the same high level while export earnings fluctuated according to the world market demand.

The rice consumption of the island diverted decisively to foreign sources during the British period. At the end of the British period, it was maintained that the cultivation of locally consumed rice and other crops lacked the dynamic element necessary to support the steady population growth in the island.[8] More importantly, there was a large deficit between the local grain production and consumer needs. At political independence, the local production of rice was about one-third of the normal requirements of the island.[9] We hold, as argued in **Chapter 5**, that the root causes for

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p.428.

[6] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p.10.

[7] Jennings, Sir Ivor, *The Economy of Ceylon*, pp. 38, 40, 94.

[8] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p.1.

[9] Das Gupta, B. B. *Economic Conditions in Ceylon in 1949*, p.1 ; International Bank

this deficit and inefficiency lay in the British period, when the island's grain consumption preference was diverted to foreign sources Large and increasing quantities of rice had to be imported to meet the local demand as a result

Wheat flour as a new consumer article was also becoming an important substitution for locally produced rice, dry grains, yams and some other vegetables during the period The imported rice and wheat flour not only checked the growth of the traditional agriculture, but also the progress of the entire traditional sector of the colonial economy The consumption and production of some kinds of grains completely disappeared from the island during the period and some others were gradually decreased as a result

Traditional agriculture played an important role in the economic development in currently developed countries Historically, the development of traditional agriculture stimulated economic development in Europe and Japan [10] The stable local consumption of the traditional agricultural products was protected in these countries through their trade policies However, the high cost of the local rice was the main reason given for the diversion of the local consumption to foreign rice in British Ceylon In contrast to this policy, the high-cost British grain was protected from imports for a long period by the corn laws and, more importantly, tied the country's consumption to the local production

> 'Under the Corn Laws, if the world price was higher than the domestic price, then the farmers was allowed to export grain Alternatively, when the international price was lower than the domestic price, imports were prohibited Thus the Corn Laws were geared to providing high prices to British farmers The Corn Laws were a subsidy provided to the agricultural sector This subsidy has been in place in England since 1688 '[11]

Similarly, Japanese rice consumption was met from local production, giving protection from imported rice until quite recent times The 'domestic price of rice in Japan continued to be well above the international price up to the World War II period '[12] In British Ceylon, such preferential treatment was not given to keep local rice consumption tied to local production The import duty on rice was not sufficient to restrict the consumer to local production It was only a small fraction of what the local rice grower paid to the colonial government as grain tax The controversial grain tax was

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for Reconstruction and Development *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p 2

[10] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, p 82

[11] ibid , p 82

[12] ibid , p 86

finally abolished at the end of the 19th century, by which time the local preference for rice consumption had been irreversibly diverted to foreign sources.

Productivity in European agriculture had been increased over hundreds of years, even before machinery came into use and the many improvements were cheap and not capital-intensive.[13] Similarly, Japanese agricultural productivity increased during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century; output increased by 72.3 per cent and agriculture labour productivity increased by 73.3 per cent.[14] The lack of creative response might be one of the weak rather than missing links in Ceylonese grain production during the British period. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to support the case that the island was experiencing diminishing returns to scale in the traditional grain production sector. Referring to the Indian subcontinent, Dasgupta says empirical studies suggest that peasant agricultural production involves constant returns to scale in the variable factors-land, labour, and material inputs-and diminishing returns to each factor.[15] This could be extended even to the resource abundant traditional grain production in British Ceylon. The opportunities were still alive in this sector for extensive cultivation, even if satisfactory technological improvement was not forthcoming to raise productivity. There was plenty of cultivable land and other resources, mainly local labour, for the purpose. At the beginning of political independence, about 80 percent of the Ceylonese were still living only a third of the area of the island and the remainder were thinly scattered over the dry zone.[16] The dry zone was the most suitable part of the island for grain cultivation and the ancient civilisation flourished there, centred around the surplus grain production **(see Chapter 4)**.

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13 Dalton, George. *Economic Systems & Society*, p. 31.

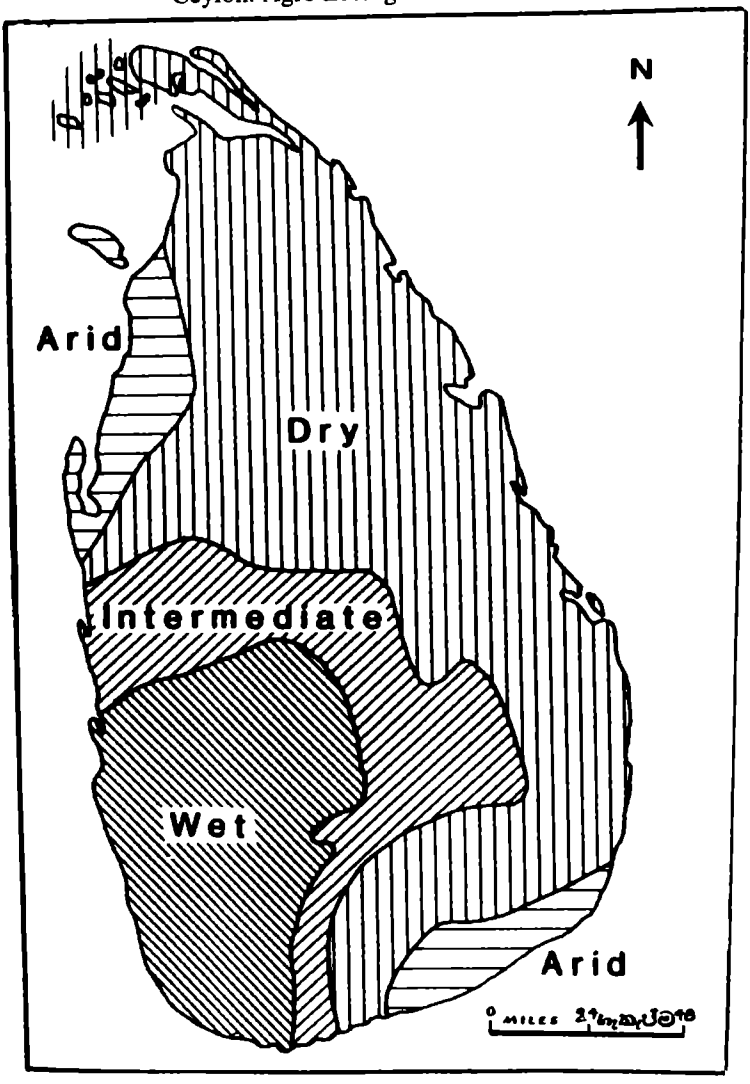
14 Ranis, G. 'The Financing of Japanese Economic Development', *The Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1958, p. 442.

15 Dasgupta, Partha. *An Inquiry into Well-being and Destitution*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 227-228; makes reference to Cline, W. *Economic Consequences of Land Reform in Brazil*, North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1970; Lau, L and Yotopoulos, P. A. 'A Test for Relative Economic Efficiency and Application to Indian Agriculture', *American Economic Review*, 61, 1971 and Bardhan, P. K. 'Size, Productivity and Returns to Scale: An Analysis of farm Level Data in Indian Agriculture', *Journal of Political Economy*, 81, 1973.

16 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p. 5.

MAP 7

Ceylon: Agro Ecological Zones



Source Ashok K Dutt and M Margaret Geib *Atlas of South Asia*, Westview Press, London, 1987

> 'Except in a few areas, this so-called Dry Zone has been neglected in modern times It was here rather than in the more inviting climate of the Wet Zone, that Ceylon developed the highly advanced ancient civilization whose ruins still testify to the remarkable levels of development in the arts, religion, technology and civil organisation first achieved more than 2,000 years ago . This ancient culture was built on rice production '[17]

The modern plantation economy was confined to the wetter parts of the island and the necessary labour was predominantly imported from southern India. As a result, there was little competition between the traditional agriculture and the modern plantations for the same resources in the colonial economy(**see map:** ***Vegetation of Ceylon-1953)***.

The lack of artificial irrigation facilities was an insurmountable barrier to the small rice grower in the dry zone without the patronage of the colonial administration. There were occasions on which colonial government renovated the dilapidated old irrigation system. However, the producers always had the problem of disposing of their surplus production because of the competition from imported rice.

Dry grain cultivation was carried out without artificial irrigation. It was an equally popular practice among the natives in the wetter and drier districts. The changing consumption patterns during the colonial period reduced the consumption of dry grains and the scope for marketing produce except for oil seeds such as sesame and mustard. Among all the dry grains, kurakkan came next to rice in the traditional consumption patterns. It was followed by the other dry grains, yams and some kinds of vegetables. Some of these foods were condemned during the colonial administration as non-nutritious and harmful to human consumption without proper scientific experiments being carried out. The natives, especially social groups belonging to the wealthy, urban or educated strata no longer consumed these traditional foods. Instead, imported wheat flour was becoming popular among the natives, although it was not cultivable in the island due to natural factors. This was a part of the creation of food consumption among the natives. Towards the middle of the twentieth century the food supply of the island began to be supplemented by the large quantities of imported wheat flour.[18] This pattern of consumption seems to have reached its peak in the early years of political independence. 'Imports of flour have tended to increase, in fact, in 1967, for the first time imports of flour were larger than imports of rice.'[19]

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[17] ibid, p 3

[18] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka A History*, p 202

[19] Richards, P and Stoutjesdjik, E *Agriculture in Ceylon until 1975*, Development

The consumption of kurakkan, the nearest local substitute for wheat, was gradually confined to the remotest corners of the island. '...[D]iets have changed as some Sri Lankans consume more rice and less "dry grains" while other consume less rice and more imported wheat products.'[20] However, this was not the case in Japan, where people continued to consume their traditional foods well into the developed stage of the country.

> '... [T]here is strong evidence that food was cheaper per calorie in Japan than in western countries until at least the late 1960s. ... traditional Japanese food sources, which were originally mostly domestic (later also colonial) or nearby fishing grounds. Thus as long as Japanese rice ... and fish were staples, rather than so-called western foods (meat, eggs and dairy products) which would have had to be imported at world market prices or grown domestically under less than ideal conditions, Japan had an advantage.' [21]

The consumption of imported grains in Ceylon was predominantly confined to the plantations and urban areas in the early stages. Thereafter, it gradually expanded into the traditional grain producing areas in the wet zones of the island, where the natives could earn a certain amount of money either from small holdings on plantations or producing other marketable goods or sometimes working in the newly emerged service sector. It was the main inroad bringing a share of the colonial economic prosperity into the traditional sector. But prosperity was seeping away from the traditional sector mostly through the diversion and creation of consumption during the period in addition to disturbing consumption.

Economic dualism is often put forward as one of the reasons for the economic backwardness of colonial Ceylon. 'Before independence, the Ceylon economy was a very typical dual economy with traditional and modern sectors existing side by side in virtual isolation. ... all capital was imported from abroad...mainly Indian labourer was employed on the estates... Land was in fact the only factor of production which could not imported...'[22] However, this was not the exact retarding factor experienced

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Centre of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 1970, p. 30.

[20] Peebles, Patrick. Sri Lanka: A Handbook of Historical Statistics, p. 328.

[21] Shinohara, Miyohei. 'Consumption', in Kazushi Ohkawa et al (eds.), *Patterns of Japanese Economic Development A Quantitative Appraisal,* Yale University Press, London, 1979, p. 168.

[22] Richards, P and Stoutjesdjik, E. *Agriculture in Ceylon until 1975*, p. 17. Many scholars have applied the dualistic hypothesis to the economy of Ceylon and Snodgrass

by the colonial economy. There were sufficient and still growing links between the modern and the traditional sectors of the economy during the period.[23] (**see Appendices on *Monetization and the Natives' Link with the Plantation***) If the local grain market had developed during the period, there would have been a mutually beneficial journey between the modern and the traditional sectors of the economy. The dualism would obviously have been diminished if the grain consumption had not been diverted to foreign sources Not only the native's preference, but also the immigrant Indian labourers' preference might have been secured for local grain over time

> 'The Indian labourers have a preference for Indian goods, but this, like all consumers' preferences, which are merely traditional, can be swept away if a good local substitute is produced ' [24]

The growing consumer demand and the expanding market for consumer goods encourage the producer and eliminate most of the problems on the supply side. For example, the growing demand had an important role to play in the progress of English agriculture. 'Feudal land tenure changed to private ownership and money rental, and subsistence production declined as the market grew '[25] The '...common theme in many explanations is the growth of the market. This perspective argues that it was in England that a broad national market first developed. As a result, specialisation in agricultural production began to evolve '[26]

The industrial and agricultural sectors are linked through demand for one another's product, especially, if international trade is not so important.[27] Agriculture plays an important role in the preconditions for take-off. It

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could be considered as one of the pioneers See Snodgrass, Donald R *Ceylon An Export Economy in Transition*

23 For a brief account against the applying of economic dualism to the British Ceylon see Bandarage, Asoka *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, Lake House Investment Ltd, Colombo, 1985, pp. 325-326

24 Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 96

25 Dalton, George *Economic Systems & Society*, p 31

26 Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P *Development Economics*, pp 82-83; makes reference to Robert H Bates 'Lessons from History or the Perfidy of English Exceptionalism and the Significance of Historical France,' *World Politics* 60, July 1988, pp 499-516

27 Bhadurai, Amit 'Orthodox Development Theories and their Application to Less Developed Countries', in Gianni Vaggi (ed) *From the Debt Crisis to Perspectives of North-South Relations*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1993, p 10

provides additional food for the increased population and people engaged in the manufacturing sector, raises income in the agricultural sector, provides a market for the manufactures and provides much needed savings to finance the expansion of the modern sectors of the economy.[28] The agricultural revolution in Britain in the 18th century was useful both as a source of labour for industry, of more food, and of capital.[29] None of these were forthcoming in any quantity from the Ceylonese grain sector during the British period. The necessary conditions for the development of the grain sector were checked mainly by the limited market for locally cultivated grains. Before the Second World War, Ceylon imported some 12 million cwt. of rice annually and the villager could seldom find a market for his home-grown rice.[30]

There were, however, factors from the supply side that impeded progress in grain production in the island. As discussed in Chapter Five, there was little government patronage during the period. The colonial land policies and the abolition of the traditional *Rajakariaya* or compulsory labour service are highlighted as two of the factors militating against rice production in British Ceylon.[31] It is true that there were sufficient bottlenecks in the production sector as the supply side analyses propose, but most of these problems would have been removed if the grain producers had received a stimulus from the market. There were a few occasions on which the local producers could respond to expanding consumer demand. For example, foreign supplies were disrupted by the Second World War. The classic supply side problems remained intact in the traditional sector, but local production did grow appreciably during the period.

> 'In some respects the war stressed the importance of developing production for domestic consumption because new sources of supply at home helped to release resources for war use elsewhere. Thus the war stimulated agriculture, particularly food production...'[32]

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[28] Grabowski, Richard and Shields, Michael P. *Development Economics*, p.17.

[29] Hunter, Guy. *Modernizing Peasant Societies: A Comparative Study in Asia and Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, pp. 9-10.

[30] Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 69.

[31] The traditional labour service *rajakariya* was formally abolished and a number of other far-reaching reforms had been brought in under the Colebrook-Cameron reforms in 1833.

[32] Ceylon, *Post-War Development Proposals*. Government Record Office, Colombo, 1946, p. vi

Similarly, when the Indian drought caused a standstill in the grain supply to the island, the local production increased in the immediate post-First World War period as a result. The supply side barriers had no relevance to either of these cases. If consumption had stayed with the local production for a considerable period of time, grain production would have been reached a stable position.

There were some advantages from the supply side during the British period which were not available in earlier times. Traditionally, the craftsmen of the island were partly dependent on farming. The diversion of consumption to clothing and other factory-made goods ruined most of the traditional industries. Now that the craftsmen had mostly lost their traditional work, more of their labour time was available for agriculture than in the past.

Some stimuli came from consumption itself. The native's consumption horizon expanded during this period. New goods and new models of the old goods were coming onto the market. The traditional limitations on clothing, housing and jewellery for the lower strata did not apply in the modern society. The growing consumer wants naturally inspired the local grain grower to produce a surplus for the market in order to pay for his new wants and desires. The monetization of the economy and the development of communications were another kind of stimulus which became available during the period. However, all these stimuli were checked by the restricted size of the consumer market.

The dynamic element of the grain consumption of the island as whole was decisively diverted to foreign sources during the British period. Rice consumption, with its stronger historical foundation than any other single food item, lost its grip on the economy, although the local production increased slightly. Some of the traditional grains disappeared for ever from the native's menu, while some were restricted to remote localities where imported food had comparatively little impact.

In contrast to the unsatisfactory performance in the grain sector, vegetable and fruit production made remarkable strides during the British period. The very same native producers with the same technology and same social and cultural milieu produced abundant fruit and vegetables, although perhaps not as efficiently as expected by some commentators. Both European and native varieties were successfully grown to meet the market demand.

Fruit and vegetables produced by natives reached the modern sector of the economy and made a link between the traditional and modern sectors. Small quantities of fruit and vegetables were supplied to steamers calling at

the Ceylon ports. The consumption of fruit and vegetables as a whole is still based on local production. The consumer in the traditional sector as well as in the modern sector is equally satisfied with the locally produced fruit and vegetables. These products, as highly perishable goods, had a natural protection from the diversion of the preference to imported articles. Thus local production was able to thrive, in contrast to the grain sector, where consumption was diverted to foreign sources.

The consumption of dried chillies, onion, turmeric, ginger and a number of other spices which were widely employed by the native to flavour his curry was diverted to foreign sources during the British period, and the local production was ruined as a result. Most of these spices had been sufficiently and perhaps efficiently produced by the native in his garden or chena since time immemorial. None of these items are perishable goods, in contrast to vegetables or fruit, and did not enjoy the natural protection that would prevent the diversion of consumption to foreign sources.

The demand for a number of European fruits could not be met within the island due to natural factors. A few of them with good keeping characteristics, notably apples and grapes, were imported mainly to cater to the demand of Europeans and middle class natives. Potato production was not efficient in the island and potatoes were imported to meet the demand during the period. The native used to prepare it as a curry to partake of mostly with rice, possibly at the expense of the traditional varieties of locally grown yams. The native's consumption of potatoes and European fruits was created during the British period.

Fruit and vegetables were the most successful subsector in the entire food sector during the British period. A considerable pressure was placed on local resources as a result of the changes in consumption patterns during the period.

Meat was not an important article of food in the ordinary natives' diet in the past.[33] They used to consume both fish and meat as condiments to season their dishes rather than as one of the main sources of food supply. An increasing trend in meat consumption was seen in the British period with the modernisation of the society. More importantly, beef consumption spread among the natives during the period.

Animal and bird keeping for the sake of meat were never a popular practice among the majority of the natives. A limited number of poultry

33 Ordinary diet of the man prior to the 18th century was essentially consisted of vegetable foods. Europe was the great exception and entirely carnivorous. See: Braudel, Fernand. *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800,* Mirham Kochan (Trans.), George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, Fontana, 1974, pp. 66-67.

was kept, but not systematically for the native's own consumption, but to dispose of in exchange for little money. The regular meat consumers during the period were Europeans, urban dwellers, the Muslim community and the people of the coastal districts.

It was maintained that the animal husbandry of the island had been retarded partly because of religious considerations.[34] The religious factor in economic performance in a society is contentious issue. Lewis says that '...some religious codes are more compatible with economic growth than others. ... Of course, the code may not be fully effective; people do not always act in accordance with the religion they profess. Priests are expected to be strict in their behaviour... '[35] However, in Ceylon, it was the traditional consumption patterns that hindered animal husbandry in the island rather than the religious factor. The very same people had from time immemorial killed wild animals as the main source of their meat supply (see **Chapter 4: *Meat and Fish* and Chapter 6: *Game***). This traditional source of meat supply was depleted with the commercialisation of wild life under the modernisation drive. Beef consumption, the new trend among the natives, seems to have been catered for by reducing the local cattle stock instead of rearing for the purpose.

Only limited quantities of meat were imported into the island in the later stages of British rule to fill the deficit between local supply and demand. The imported meat especially targeted the needs of Europeans and the middle class natives. History shows that widespread meat consumption is not a necessary factor for economic growth and development. For example, in Japan, meat was a food for wealthy people and was usually served in restaurants. Its consumption was very low before the Second World War.[36] Changes were brought about in meat consumption patterns during the British period in Ceylon, but there was no pressure on local resources as a result.

Cattle had long been kept in the island, predominantly for agricultural and transport purposes. The consumption of dairy products had been rare among the natives of the island. A new trend in dairy product consumption was seen during the British period, but it was satisfied mainly from imported milk powder, butter and cheese. The consumption of the dairy

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[34] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p.18.

[35] Lewis, W. Arthur. *Theory of Economic Growth*, pp. 105-106.

[36] Yazuzawa, Mine, 'Changes in Life Style in Japan: Pattern and Structure of Modern Consumption', In Henry Baudet and Henk van der Meulen (eds.) *Consumer Behaviour and Economic Growth in the Modern Economy* , Croom Helm, London, 1982, p. 186.

products is a creation of consumption for the majority of the natives Dairy products have become one of the major consumer articles imported into the island over time There seems to have been no pressure on local dairy producers as a result of the changes in dairy consumption pattern during the British period

The consumption of cured fish was traditionally more popular among the natives than that of fresh fish This consumption pattern further widened and increased during the British period On the one hand, the decline in game forced the native to rely more and more on dried fish while, on the other hand, dried fish was more readily available during the period as a result of the development of communications and trade

Fresh fish consumption also increased, mainly as a result of more efficient transport facilities, although it was predominantly confined to the plantation districts and to the urban areas, in addition to the coastal areas The consumption of fresh fish was fully met by local production, while most of the cured fish needs were met by imports The abundant local fish resources were not exploited to meet the consumer demand for cured fish Insufficient number of new hands were being recruited into the traditional fishing community to increase the catching capacity The native fishing industry failed to absorbed the whole of the increased demand during the period As an island nation, Ceylon could have satisfied much of her protein needs from sea fish

The early fish consumption pattern in Japan was somewhat similar to that of the Ceylonese, but the Japanese greatly exploited the fishing resources to meet their local consumer needs Fish was the main source of animal protein for the Japanese before the turn of the 20th century 'But this perishable food was eaten only by people living in areas where it could be delivered immediately To supply to places outside these areas it was usually salted or dried '[37]

Considerable changes took place in fish consumption patterns under the British administration, although the catching and curing of local fish made only a little progress There was little pressure on the local fishing industry as a result However, there was no resource displacement as a result of the increased demand for foreign fish

The natives in Ceylon traditionally consumed locally made coarse sugar, while the excess production was exported Consumer preference shifted from the locally produced coarse sugar to the imported cane sugar during the British period As a result, the consumption and production of coarse

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[37] Yazuzawa, Mine, *Changes in Life Style in Japan Pattern and Structure of Modern Consumption*, p 186

sugar declined and the import of cane sugar increased. The natives showed no interest in producing cane sugar for their own consumption on a small scale, nor was there any appreciable attempt to produce sugar on a large scale to meet local consumption or serve the overseas market. There was no large-scale investment in sugar production since the entire horizon of large-scale private investment in British Ceylon was dominated by the interest in a few export-oriented plantation crops. Some of the resources released from coarse sugar production may have been employed in other production processes, such as toddy tapping and perhaps food growing. Some of them may have been left idle without being re-employed in other production sectors.

It seems that the colonial administration finally realised the importance of encouraging the Ceylonese to consume local products. Only when the political independence of the island was looming on the horizon did the colonial agricultural and marketing department emphasise a three-point formula to promote the demand for local production. This proposal could be interpreted as a revitalisation of the policy of winning back local consumption to local production.

> '(1) To increase the demand for the products of Ceylon, by educating the Ceylon public to consume Ceylon products in greater quantities. (2) To increase the supply of products in Ceylon to meet this increased demand (3) To organise orderly marketing to provide the necessary link between the increased demand and supply, which will give the Ceylon consuming public their Ceylon products at a reasonable price, while at the same time ensuring to the Ceylon producer a fair price for his produce '[38]

The overall economic progress of British Ceylon rotated mainly around modern plantation agriculture. 'This advancement of the levels of the national well being has been achieved by a virtual revolution of Ceylon's agriculture over the past century, accompanied by limited industrialisation.'[39] However, the rate of growth in the traditional food sector largely determined the overall economic performance and the living conditions of the majority of the natives, since it was in this sector that more than two-thirds of the population of British Ceylon lived. It is maintained that 'At the end of British rule Sri Lanka was left dependent on foreign sources for a very large proportion of its basic food requirements

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[38] Administration Report of the Commissioner for the Development of Agriculture Marketing, 1938, p 4, quoted in Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 80

[39] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p 1

and after independence Sri Lankan governments have had to invest considerable resources to correct this imbalance.'[40]

In general, the food sector of the colonial economy changed considerably during the period of our investigation. A number of new food articles were added to the native's consumer basket, while the consumption of some other food articles was partly or wholly diverted from local to foreign sources. Some of the resources were displaced from production and some others were re-employed, while the rest were left idle as a result. However, there is no evidence to support the argument that most of the resources displaced were re-employed in more efficient production sectors, as proposed by the international trade theories.

Clothing: The expansion of the industrial sector in some form or another is a necessary condition for the economic growth and development in a modern economy.[41] The agricultural sector has its own limits to satisfy the growing needs of a dynamic society. It also has to face the maximum production boundary under normal conditions when compared to manufacturing industry. Among numerous other plus points, the labour productivity is higher in the industrial sector than in agriculture and historically industry has provided a satisfactory solution to growing population and limited cultivable land.

> 'The historical process of inter sectoral transfer of labour productivity is substantially higher in industry than in agriculture. Even today, on a rough estimate, industry is twice as productive as agriculture when measured in terms of output per worker in the developed market economies; in developing countries this can be as high as eight times.'[42]

There was a multitude of native industries in the island in the past, mostly to meet the needs of the traditional subsistence economy (**see Appendix on *Native Industries***). A majority of them were not strong enough to survive in the modern economy that was emerging during the British period. However, cotton cloth weaving could have made a greater contribution to economic progress in the traditional sector of the economy if cloth consumption had not been diverted to foreign sources during the period.

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[40] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka· A History,* p 13.

[41] Australia and New Zealand are considered as classical examples of developed countries with an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry. However, these countries have strong food processing sectors

[42] Bhadurai, Amit 'Orthodox Development Theories and their Application to Less Developed Countries', p. 9

There was a strong local resource base - raw cotton and skilled labour - for the continuation of the industry. The only visible disadvantage was the traditional technology compared with what England and some other countries had achieved since the industrial revolution, and the quality issue which was again related to the traditional technology itself. Nevertheless, these disadvantage could have been easily be overcome with small family production units and an abundant labour supply with low production costs.[43]

Cotton growing and cloth weaving had long been an integral part of the native economy. The consumption of foreign cloth also has a long history in the island and goes back well beyond the European intervention to the island's affairs (**see Chapter 4: *Cloths***). Cloth imports in those days were predominantly confined to high value luxurious fabrics for the superior classes of society. Limited quantities of ordinary clothing were imported into the island during the Portuguese and, especially, during the Dutch period However, there are no records to support the view that raw cotton was being imported for cloth weaving prior to the British administration Sufficient cotton was cultivated within the island itself to meet the local weavers' requirements.

Cloth weaving came to the brink of extinction and cotton cultivation virtually ceased during the British period. The local production of clothing was at a negligible level compared with the natives' requirements at the time of the island's political independence.[44] It had become the largest single manufactured article imported into the island.[45] Historical evidence suggests that the early phase of modern economic growth began with food, clothing and shelter.[46] For example, the Japanese industrialisation began with light industry, followed by heavy industrial products.

> 'Pre-war industrialisation centred on light industry, especially textiles, which as a major export item achieved extensive scale economies Such rapid expansion

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[43] The people of the *Chaliya* caste, the weavers of artistic clothing in the southern districts of the island, were partly entrusted with cinnamon peelings even before the British But the *beravayos*, *kinnaras* and some other weaving castes/classes in the northern and the eastern districts were readily available for the purpose The diversion of the *chaliya* caste from cloth weaving to cinnamon peeling never created a great labour supply problem for the traditional weaving sector in Ceylon

[44] Das Gupta, B B *Economic Conditions in Ceylon in 1949*, p 1

[45] Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 40

[46] Easterlin, Richard A 'Economic Growth Overview', in David L Sills (ed) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol 4, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, p 399

> having this type of impact on the relative price of textiles and thus on consumption structure is a plausible explanation of the increase in clothing's constant-price share '[47]

Almost all countries achieved industrialisation under the cover of favourable government policies to keep local consumption patronising local industries as a top priority.[48] The consumption of foreign industrial goods was discouraged in one way or another. For example, Germany and, later, the United States sought protection from the more efficiently produced goods of Great Britain in order to start local industries.[49]

The economy of Ceylon is a small one with a limited local market and little resource diversity. Except for food, clothing and some other light industries, there was not a sufficient market within the country for industrial development. When compared with the natural resources, light industries based on human skill and technological know-how were the most suitable case for the economy of Ceylon.

> 'Our conclusion is that, Ceylon's main industrial growth should be centred on the development of numerous small or medium-sized industries, rather than a few large ones. These should be widely scattered and diversified, to take advantage of labour and raw materials in various parts of the island.'[50]

This proposal fits extremely well with the traditional family clothing production units which had been dispersed all over the island. However, the diversion of local cloth consumption to foreign sources destroyed the ideal conditions for the development of the cloth weaving in the island. The Ceylonese industrial sector in general received only a temporary respite when the foreign manufactured goods were not available in the market.

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[47] Shinohara, Miyohei 'Consumption', p. 170.

[48] We are not dealing with the export-oriented industrialisation strategy in the recent past, nor will we enter into the controversial 'foreign market factor' in British industrialisation here. Even if we leave aside these two cases, there is sufficient room to argue from the historical experiences of other industrialised countries that domestic consumption is important in the early stages of industrialisation.

[49] Galbraith, John Kenneth *The World Economy Since the Wars*. Mandarin Paperbacks, London, 1995, p. 3 and Kindleberger, C. P. 'Foreign Trade and Economic Growth: Lessons from Britain and France', *The Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol. XI, Nos. 1, 2 & 3 1961-1962, p. 301, makes reference to Habakkuk, H. J. 'The Historical Experience on Basic Conditions of Economic Progress', in L. H. Dupriez, (ed.), *Economic Progress*, Louvain, 1955.

[50] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p. 27.

> The second world war the shortage of most traditional imports which directly lead to Ceylon itself becoming for the first time an attractive domestic market for industrial production, the main difficulty however being that not only were final goods in short supply but raw materials, machinery and construction materials were as well Nevertheless, both the government and private sectors succeeded in establishing a number of industrial enterprises and although prices were high and quality relatively low, most industries made profits during the war years After the war, when normal import flows were restored, most industries set up during the war collapsed, and the first major industrialisation drive in Ceylon came to an end, leaving behind a certain bias against industrialisation which still persists '[51]

The diversion of the island's cloth consumption to foreign sources displaced the resources employed in the local cotton growing and cloth weaving sectors A certain percentage of these resources was absorbed into other production sectors of the economy, especially in the wetter districts of the island, where plantation agriculture and its production processing units were present. However, cotton growing and a high proportion of cloth weaving had been mainly concentrated in the drier districts of the island(**see chapter 7**). There is no strong evidence to show that these displaced resources were re-employed in other production sectors, even if we set aside the re-employment of those resources in more efficient sectors.

9.4 Lighting and Detergents

Traditional lighting sources and washing materials were replaced by modern substances during the British period (**see Chapter 8: *Fossil Fuels for Vegetable Oil***) . The consumption of these new articles varied over time and space. Imported candles, kerosene, gas, soap, shampoo and, later on, thermal power become consumer articles among the native population. The consumption of some of those articles by the natives could be considered to be a creation of consumption, as they were novel to the natives. The consumption of some others could simply be considered as a diversion of consumption from local materials to foreign substitutes. If we accept the contemporary comments, the traditional articles were inferior and expensive and the modern articles were superior and cheap. The consumption of the new articles was widely considered to be an improvement in the living standards of the natives.

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[51] Richards, P and Stoutjesdjik, E *Agriculture in Ceylon until 1975*, p 18

If we examine the local resources displaced by the changes in consumption of these consumer articles, some of the local lighting substances did find alternative uses in the modern economy. However, a high proportion of the traditional substances which were used either as lighting fuels or washing materials apparently found no place in the modern market. The native labour engaged in collecting the raw materials and processing them into consumable substances suffered the same fate, although most of the industry had previously relied on family labour and the family production unit.

9.5 Medical Care

Expenditure on medical care and education is still considered to be a part of consumption.[52] The native's medical care during the British period was considerably diverted from the traditional to the western system. At the end of the British period the native treatments had been relegated to a much lower position from their historical peak. This could be regarded as the shifting of the consumption from traditional local medical care to modern western medical care.

In one sense, the native's health and hygiene experienced both good and bad during the British administration. There were many occasions on which some epidemics frequently visited the natives as a result of the increased international intercourse during the period. At the same time, new vaccinations were introduced which were able to control some of the deadly epidemics to a great extent. The introduction of the innovative western medical care undoubtedly improved the health conditions of the native. This was one of the important positive effects on the native and it could be considered as an investment in human capital by the British in Ceylon.

The death rate of the island declined notably during the period, mainly due to the western medical care system. Nevertheless, the achievements were not as great as is usually claimed. It was maintained at the end of the British period that the rate of sickness did not fall with the death rate. On the contrary, the attendance at hospitals was rising.[53] The villagers were weak, inefficient and emaciated by malaria, hookworm and malnutrition.[54]

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[52] Samuelson, Paul A and Nordhaus. William D. *Economics*, p. 436

[53] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p. 40.

[54] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 90.

In addition, the medical facilities available in the public hospitals were not sufficient to meet the native's needs.

> 'The hospital and out patient department are badly overcrowded, all kinds of trained medical personal are insufficient. Obvious cases of malnutrition are to seen, water supply and drainage are woefully inadequate, general sanitary standard is low and much overcrowding and bad housing.'[55]

What was the pressure on the local resources as a result of the introduction of the western medical care system? Some natives, maybe several thousands in number, were recruited to the western medical system, mostly as minor employees in the early stages. Higher posts were open to the native with the expansion of western education in the island. The productivity of native labour may have increased, depending upon the improved general health conditions.

It is hardly possible to say that an appreciable amount of local resources were displaced by the diversion of the country's medical consumption to the western medical system. The medications for the traditional treatments were principally collected from nearby woods and were almost free. The native physician came from the patients' own village or one physician for two or three villages possibly, depending upon the size of the village(s). The same tradition seems to have survived side by side with the western medical care system throughout the British period with a lower profile than previously. All the medications and peripheral instruments for the western medical care system were imported. The improving health conditions raised the population growth of island, but no parallel employment opportunities were created for the growing population. On the one hand, the growing population further enhanced the power of diverted consumption and created new consumption for foreign goods. On the other hand, exhaustive consumption pressure was placed on some of the local resources. The growing population pressure was mostly felt in the wetter plantation districts, where the majority of natives had lived even before the arrival of the Europeans, because of certain historical factors (see ***Prelude to the British Period***). The natives living in these wet areas lost their traditionally cultivated uplands to the plantations. No factories, mines or shipyards came into operation to absorb these natives, as happened in England after the land enclosure. The labour requirements in the plantations were met by cheap immigrant labour from India.[56]

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[55]International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *The Economic Development of Ceylon*, p. 40.

[56] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951,

The special nature of the medical care system deserves special treatment in an account of the consumption pattern. It is quite different from the ordinary consumer articles. However, according to our definition of the consumption pattern. it is not difficult to incorporate this into the changes in the consumption pattern. The considerable changes made to the medical care system of the island produced both positive and negative effects during the period. It seems pretty obvious that there were more positive than the negative effects. However, the same medical care consumption pattern created certain characteristics related to underdevelopment, such as growing population pressure, fiscal pressure for the continuation of the medical facilities and partially achieved medical and health care targets.

9.6 Growing Consumer Needs

The natives' necessities in British Ceylon were continually growing, although the tempo varied between localities and social classes. In general, many new consumer articles were added to the natives' preference list. The growth of internal and external trade and of roads and railways dispersed the new wants and desires throughout the island (**see Appendices on *Trade and the Ceylonese and Road and Railways***). The monetization of the subsistence economy cleared the way for every native to earn at least a little money in one way or another (see appendix on Monetization). The necessities of the native's life exceeded the earning opportunities open to him (**see Appendix on *Needs of Life***). The great majority of the new consumer wants were satisfied by imports rather than by local products.

> '... the monetization of the economy that had taken place through the policies and administrative measures of the Colonial Government, had made Sri Lanka's economy into a consumer oriented one. This enabled the manufactured goods produced in British factories to be sold here in increasing quantities.'[57]

The households of the higher social groups were more consumer oriented. Their thirst for the new consumer passion was not conducive to the growth of the market for local products. Referring to the middle class consumer at political independence, Jennings says;

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pp.72-73.

[57] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty: Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p. 33.

> The middle classes spend much more money, but they are few in number - say 100,000 families - and the breadth of their demand militates against the creation of much of an internal market.'[58]

The middle classes followed the consumption habits of the Europeans. Their housing, household utensils, personal consumer articles and social life were a kind of competition to exhibit their western consumer habits (**see Chapter 8**). The social competition among the wealthy natives for consumption was clearly visible in their houses. In general, changes in dwellings were confined mainly to the wealthy classes or to the newly emerging urban areas. The traditional restrictions on housing were no longer valid under the British. Nevertheless, the majority of the ordinary natives lived in small huts, as they had done under the native rulers, although some of their domestic utensils and furniture were changing.

The natives in Ceylon as whole had a greater preference for consumer articles produced in the colonised country as did in many other former colonies. Jones et al say; 'In all of the African countries there seem to be a strong general craving for the industrial products of the Western World.'[59] The strong preference for foreign consumer goods was greatly retarded the production of even the simplest consumer article within a country where the colonial legacy was strong.

> '... we have in many respects failed to produce even the simplest of items for the day to day requirements of our people. These failures cannot be blamed on external factors alone. The blame must be put squarely on all Zambians in all walks of life... We must all accept that we are too consumption-oriented. Our orientation to consumption is easily illustrated by the massive amounts of financial resources that are being spent on importing consumer goods, most of which we can easily produce ...'[60]

In the case of Ceylon, the small economy and limited natural resource base seems to have been the great barrier to developing a capital goods industry in the island as compared with what was successfully done in some other countries. Nevertheless, there was a fairly strong resource base for the development of a few selected light industries, first for local consumption and perhaps later for the international market and finance the import of capital goods.

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[58] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 96.

[59] Jones, William O. and Mérat, Christian, *Consumption of Exotic Consumer Goods as an Indicator of Economic Achievement in Ten Countries of Tropical Africa*, p. 37.

[60] Kaunda, Kenneth D. *Orientation to Consumption Verses Production.*, pp. 5-6.

> 'The Soviet method was to restrict internal production of consumption goods in order to produce capital goods In Ceylon it would be necessary to restrict *imports* of consumption goods in order to increase imports of capital goods, while maintaining *exports* in order to pay for the capital goods [61]

The native in general was very keen to satisfy his new consumer wants during the British period This behaviour was particularly demonstrated by the high and middle income households, although the dividing line between two social groups was somewhat blurred The consumption pattern of the nobles and aristocrats even under the native rulers was notably superior to that of the ordinary native But they had social and economic responsibility to the society as a whole during that period and most of their consumer articles were produced by native craftsmen and their food and beverages originated within the island itself In all, the growing needs exerted no appreciable direct pressure on local resources to increase production during the British period

9.7 Disturbing and Exhaustive Consumption

Traditionally, indolence, superstition, conservatism, religion and many other aspects of the social milieu have been highlighted as factors retarding the economic growth and development of a country However, some of these elements have not been strong enough to thwart the economic development of a country as has always been supposed Instead there were some other obvious retarding factors created during the colonial period which militated against economic development Two which have been discussed in this work are 'disturbing consumption' and 'exhaustive consumption' **(see Chapter 6: *Beverages and Intoxicants*).** The former is about the effects of the consumption of alcohol and intoxicants and the latter is about environmental degradation and the depletion of the certain resources in the subsistence economy

The importation, production and distribution of liquor and other intoxicants were streamlined under the British administration of the island This could be regarded as the creation of consumption among the natives for these articles The relationship between the consumption of alcohol and economic conditions is completely different from that of food consumption Social and psychological influences are at work in alcohol consumption to

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[61] Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 94

a greater extent.[62] Therefore, we refer to alcohol and intoxicant consumption as *disturbing* consumption. It was also one of the ways that diverted the traditional sector's slowly growing capital into the colonial government coffers.[63] It was one of the factors that retarded economic growth within the traditional sector of the economy. The monetization of the traditional subsistence economy has everywhere been a slow and protracted process. The penetration of the money economy even into the rural areas of Europe was a slow process, stretching from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries.[64] The scope for the division of labour, specialisation and expansion of the market is limited to the extent of the money economy.

> 'In a growing economy monetary expansion is also required to allow an increased volume of transactions to take place. ...The increased use of money not only releases resources, but it also saves and generates resources. ...Money generates resources by facilitating exchange and thereby permitting the greater division of labour and specialisation.'[65]

Alcohol and other intoxicants were sold only for money, but most of the ordinary consumer goods were still being exchanged by barter in many parts of the island. The depletion of limited money from the traditional sector may have checked the division of labour and specialisation in that sector. Not only the ordinary native, but the native entrepreneurial classes seem to have spent a considerable amount of their colonial fortunes on liquor. .

> '...In many cases the native planters and traders show remarkable instincts of business and enterprise, extend their operations and improve their lands. In the other cases the added wealth too often finds its way to the liquor shop and in the purpose of the cheap "Luxuries" generally of European manufacture, which are now common in every village bazaar.'[66]

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62 Baudet, Henry and Meulen, Henk van der, *Food Consumption and Welfare 1852-1911*, in Henry Baudet, and Henk van der Meulen, (ed.)Consumer Behaviour and Economic Growth in the Modern Economy, Croom Helm, London, 1982 p. 83.

63 The other important method that diverted the peasant's extremely limited money into the colonial government's coffer was the commutation of the tax in kind/labour into a money tax.

64 Bath, Slicker Van, B. B. *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, A. D. 500 to 1850*, Arnold, 1963, p. 16 ; quoted in Dalton, George. *Economic Systems & Society*, p. 31.

65 Thirlwall, A. P. *Growth and Development with special reference to developing economies*,(5th ed.) Macmillan, 198?, p. 78.

66 Administration Reports - vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO: 57/157/1904.

The most popular liquor among the native was *arrack,* which was produced in the island and also exported in limited quantities in the early stages of the British rule Some pressure was placed on local resources as a result of the production, distribution and exports New income and employment opportunities were created by the process However, it seems that the total economic losses were higher than the total gains from the entire process It was an economically disturbing consumer practice in the transformation stage of the Ceylonese society from the medieval to the modern period

The issues relating to exhaustive consumption in our case study have been discussed in Chapter 6 on game and in appendix on environmental impact The former is mainly about the depletion of the traditional sources of meat consumption and related issues It is directly relevant to consumption in the subsistence economy The latter is about the environmental problems created during the British administration They were indirectly created as a result of resource exploitation to meet the growing needs in European countries The consumption of game is out of the question in a modern economy as a sustainable source of food supply It belongs to the same category as slash and burn cultivation However, the depletion of the traditional game never created counterpart production flows in the form of animal husbandry in the island

The exploitation of resources for plantations brought considerable benefits to the economy The foundations of the modern economy were laid down by the plantations introduced by the British [67] Exhaustive consumption therefore produced both negative and positive effects Nevertheless, whether the losers were sufficiently compensated by the entire process is a open question

9.8 Summary

The consumption patterns of the people of Ceylon were subject to changes during the period of our investigation and there was a long-term impact on the economy as a result The four major aspects of the changes in the consumption pattern - creation of consumption, diversion of consumption, exhaustive consumption and disturbing consumption - and the four responses to the changes in consumption pattern - defiant response, creative response, adaptive response and barren response - were simultaneously present during this period This becomes apparent when consumer articles

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[67] Gunawardene,Elaine *External Trade and Economic Structure of Ceylon 1900 1955*,p 2, Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886 1931 with special reference to tea and rubber* p 1

are narrowly defined or when individual consumer articles are selected from the major categories. For example, such consumer articles as fruit and vegetables made a creative response, while wheat consumption made a barren response in the broader category of food consumption.

Nevertheless, a growth-inducing creative response to the changes in the consumption pattern was a rare occurrence in the British colonial economy. Nor was the defiant response a common one during this period. The predominant responses to the changes in the consumption pattern were either the 'barren response' or the 'adaptive response'. Neither of these was conducive to the long-term economic growth and development of the island, so that the changes in the consumption pattern exerted only a limited pressure on the local resources. It was not sufficient to bring the economy from an undeveloped to a developed state.

Consumption is an integral part of any society at any stage of economic development. In the broad sense, consumption is like a two-edged sword: it can produce both positive and negative impacts in a society. Consumption is a close companion for advancing up the economic development ladder from a lower stage to a higher stage (**see Chapter 3: *Consumption and Economic Development***). In its impact on economic growth, consumption may produce either economic development or underdevelopment. Changes in the consumption pattern historically helped to bring some countries from the undeveloped to the developed state, but took others from the undeveloped to the underdeveloped state (**see Chapter 3**). When the economy of British Ceylon is viewed as a whole, the salient feature from the perspective of consumption is the changes in the consumption pattern. The living standard of the natives improved as a result, but the same consumption pattern blocked economic growth, keeping the economy at a low-level equilibrium.

PART II

9.9 Conclusions on Consumer Theories and Concepts

Adam Smith maintains that the sole end purpose of all production is consumption. This is not much different from the post-Smithian neoclassical linearity analysis, where consumption is at the end of a chain starting from the mixing of resources for the production of goods and services. Smith says that the necessity of life is not only the commodities that support life, but the needs imposed even on the poor by the customs of society. This seems quite universal at all the stages of human civilisation and right across any society at any given point in time. For Smith, insufficient consumption by the worker could threaten social efficiency and this is partly applicable to investment in human capital in the modern analyses of development studies.

Smith was against the consumption of liquor on moral grounds and maintained that nature did not render it necessary. Liquor was considered to be a luxury and he proposed to increase taxes on it. In some societies the consumption of liquor has become a custom to be followed even by the poor classes. Smith's concept of life necessities imposed by custom is therefore contradicted by his opinion of liquor consumption. In our alternative theoretical framework, we refer to liquor and intoxicant consumption as disturbing consumption, not merely on moral, but also on economic grounds. Disturbing consumption is an addictive behaviour which may seriously check the economic efficiency and the accumulation of liquid assets in a society at the early stages of economic growth and development.

Smith was worried that too much consumption by the affluent might have detrimental effects on economic progress. He was in favour of high taxes on luxury consumption. For him, capital was augmented by parsimony and thrift while prodigality and misconduct ruined the capital accumulation of a nation. Therefore, overconsumption and extravagance were against the economic progress of a country.

The consumer behaviour of the leisure classes in Veblen's analysis may be considered as a special case of luxury consumption. For him, the consumer behaviour of the affluent classes was characterised by pageantry display in order to make an impression on others rather than to satisfy wants. He termed this conspicuous consumption. This form of consumer behaviour is contrary to rational economic behaviour, although it may be a

peculiar form of utility maximisation behaviour by the affluent classes. The Veblen effect - decreasing volume of demand for the falling prices and increasing volume of demand for rising prices - has a particularly uneasy relationship with the law of demand in economics.

The middle and higher classes of the colonial economies practised conspicuous consumption or conspicuous waste behaviour. More especially, the social classes who were on the lower rung in pre-capitalist social ladder now wanted to indulge in conspicuous consumption in order to show that they belonged to the superior social groups of the society. The conspicuous consumption of the higher income classes in the early stages of economic growth may adversely affect the savings and the capital accumulation of a nation. Luxurious consumption and its impact on the savings or morality of a society is not sufficient for our analytical framework. The final outcome is determined by the nature of the responses made to consumption. For example, if luxurious consumption is present with the barren response, it is harmful for the economic growth of a country. However, if it is associated with the creative response, it may generate some favourable influences on economic growth.

The primary sector of the economic structure from which most of the basic necessities of life originate is very important in economically backward societies. The relationship between increasing income and the consumption of these basic necessities has a special character. The proportion of spending for the consumption of basic necessities declines as income continues to increase. Increasing income readjusts the structure of consumer expenditure over the time. As for Engels' law, when consumption expenditure increases, the proportion spent on food consumption declines. The consumer demand for food is inelastic, but is elastic for luxuries. Therefore, a country may exploit the secure demand for foodstuffs and other basic necessities, such as clothes, in the early stages of the economic growth. The production of these may be easily carried out with simple tools and unskilled labour, perhaps as a preparation for more advanced and complex forms of production in later stages.

Consumption has not always been condemned, nor have savings always been commended in the economic literature. For Malthus, the accumulation of capital was essential for the long-term economic progress of a nation, but excessive savings tended to reduce the demand for consumer goods. He was against extravagance and over-consumption but accepted that too high a propensity to save and to invest ultimately encroached upon consumption. The economic progress of a nation would come to a halt if there was not sufficient effective demand for consumer goods. This concept of demand is

considered as a precursor to Keynes' effective aggregate demand analysis. However, Keynesian effective demand analysis is about the periodical downturns in market economies, while Malthusian demand analysis is about the long-term performance of an economy.

The underconsumption theories in general deal with the chronic deficiency of demand for consumer goods. As a result of the demand deficiency, market economies experience economic depressions, underutilization of productive resources and falling price levels. This is because excessive saving, insufficient spending or low wages result in a failure to buy the products of the economy. The underconsumption theories emphasise the demand side of the economy, as Keynes did. Nevertheless, Keynes emphasised deficient demand for investment, while the underconsumptionists, like Malthus, emphasise consumer demand. Again, underconsumptionists stress the long-term demand deficiency for consumer goods in contrast to Keynes's short-term aggregate demand analysis. For the underconsumptionists, depression is not a cyclical, temporary phenomenon, but rather a natural and persistent long-term phenomenon.

In contrast to the underconsumptionists' or Keynes' analyses, Say maintains that the aggregate demand of an economy is sufficient to purchase fully employed production. The purchasing power is generated from the production itself and the temporary recessions are self-correcting phenomena. Say's market law is undisputed in a barter economy, where commodities are exchanged for commodities. It may be true even in a money economy where money is employed only for transaction and precautionary purposes, but not for speculative purposes as viewed in the pre-Keynes revolution.

There was hardly any demand inadequacy or unemployment in pre-capitalist subsistence economies, where the households mostly consumed what they produced. The limited surplus in the economy was consumed by aristocrats and nobles or spent on wars and charities. Our alternative analytical framework deals mainly with the transition period from the subsistence economy to capitalism where almost no serious demand deficiencies are visible. The exchange economy is at its immature early stages and most of the people have many unsatisfied basic requirements of life. They tend to dispose almost all of the money and exchangeable production to acquire either basic requirements of life or what they were not able to consume in pre-capitalist periods - mostly luxury items. Nevertheless, the defiant response to the changes in consumption pattern in our analytical framework may be approximated for the demand deficiency analyses after making certain modifications.

The dominant consumer theories in economics have their roots in the post Keynes period. Consumption expenditure is only one of the components in the aggregate demand in an economy as proposed by Keynes. For his absolute income hypothesis, consumption expenditure increases with increasing income, but not as much as the increasing income. A greater proportion of increasing income is saved as a result. Therefore, the periodical economic downturns are no more than a failure to make use of the potential savings in economies. The absolute income hypothesis is relevant to economies where people have satisfied their basic requirements of life. From that point onward, there may arise opportunities to save a greater portion of the increasing income rather than spending it on consumption.

Keynes's 'psychological rule' is for the modern communities in developed capitalist countries, but not for the undeveloped or underdeveloped economies. The greater amount of increasing income was expected to be saved in modern capitalist communities. The communities in our analysis have an overwhelming majority of unsatisfied basic requirements of life. The propensity to consume in these societies always seems to be higher than in developed capitalist societies. It is widely accepted that one of the serious economic problems in underdeveloped economies is not with the unutilised excess savings, but with insufficient savings to invest.

The relative income hypothesis of Duesenberry proposes that a household's propensity to consume is determined by its place in the income distribution, and that it is easier for a household to adjust to increasing income than to declining income. The consumption of goods not only satisfies the physical needs, but also fulfils cultural needs. In one sense, it is closer to the Veblen's conspicuous consumption, where higher income groups spend their money not only to satisfy their physical needs, but also their cultural needs. For Duesenberry, the consumer compares what he consumes with others in the society. The low income consumer wants to conform with the consumers at the top of the consumer ladder belonging to the higher income groups. The dual role of consumption here fulfils the physical and cultural needs of a household, which is somewhat closer to Smith's consumption in a society where the necessities of life include not only physical needs, but also the needs imposed by the customs of a society. In our analytical framework, the customs relating to consumption are more flexible than other social phenomena. The responses to changes in consumption pattern are rigid only when the defiant response is present.

The life-cycle hypothesis suggests that individual consumption does not depend on current income; instead the individual has a lifetime consumption plan which is based on the expected earnings over the lifetime. One of the most important characteristics of this hypothesis is that consumption is independent of current income. In the transitional stages, family bonds are still strong. Therefore, the consumer plan here covers people belonging to a few generations living in one house, rather than the individual life span. Dasgupta's analysis of household consumer behaviour in an underdeveloped society may be more relevant here than the life-cycle hypothesis proposed by Modigiliani et al [68]

The permanent income hypothesis postulates that the consumption of a household is proportional to its permanent income, which is the expected average long-term earnings from human and non-human wealth over the planning horizon. Human and non-human wealth is common to many stages of social evolution and only the forms of wealth have changed over time. For example, in the pre-capitalist societies, non-specialised muscular power was important in human wealth, while cattle, lands, implements were important forms of non-human wealth. In modern capitalist societies specialised labour, money, bonds, equities and real estate are important.

For the permanent income hypothesis, the individual has a consumption programme for the whole life span. The daily consumer budget decisions are made on the basis of this lifelong programme. The consumer durables in the permanent income theories are considered to be a part of the household stock of wealth and only the flow of service is treated as consumption. This is contrary to the general treatments given to the households' consumer durables in economics, more specially in national accounting principles, where consumer durables are considered on an equal footing with normal consumer articles.

The special treatment given to consumer durables is important in the developed capitalist societies, where these items have a significant role to play. For example, the age of mass consumer production has more consumer durables than the other stages of human history. In pre-capitalist societies consumer durables were scarce and confined to aristocrats and nobles. It is maintained that when people in economically backward countries made contact with the Europeans, they start to purchase consumer

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[68]Dasgupta examines inter-generational food allocation as a method of savings/investment in dynastic family consumption, where adults feed children when they are young and children feed adults when they are old It is a form of life-cycle saving in a non-market economy See Dasgupta, Partha. *An Inquiry into Well-being and Destitution*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, 212-217, 245-249

durables, although their income did not warrant this type of consumption. There were no reliable sources of income in societies which were in the transitional phase from pre-capitalism to capitalism to maintain a smooth flow of consumption as proposed by the permanent income hypothesis.

The dominant consumer theories and concepts which we have discussed here and in Chapter Two have mainly concentrated on consumer behaviour in developed capitalist economies. Only scant attention has been paid to the pre-capitalist periods on rare occasions. The discussions on the pre-capitalist periods have once again concentrated on the historical experiences of developed countries.[69] In general, no standard consumer theory has paid due attention to the long-term relationship between the changes in consumption and economic growth and/or (under)development.[70] Instead, these theories have discussed the opposite situation, i.e. economic growth and consumption where consumption always depends on income, production or supply. When and where consumption and economic growth are discussed, the discussion has been essentially confined to a short-run relationship.[71] For example, the short term relationship between consumption and economic growth as explained in Keynes's aggregate demand analysis.

Not only consumer theories, but also the literature on consumption and economic changes have concentrated on the experiences of the capitalist economy. See, for example Fine and Leopold. Their review of consumption and economic growth regretfully neglected the socio-economic conditions in a pre-capitalist (or at least pre-industrialised) economy in their criticism of McKendrick's consumer revolution and economic growth. In our theoretical framework we have concentrated, although not fully, on the transitional phase from the pre-capitalism to capitalism, giving special

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[69] See, for example, Modigliani, F and Tarantelli, E. 'Consumption Function in a Developing Economy and the Italian Experience', *The Collected Papers of Franco Modigliani*, vol. 2, and Webberian hypothesis on Catholic anti-private accumulation to Protestant approval of accumulation. See, for a summary discussion, Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, pp. 13-19

[70] Jeffry James has paid attention to consumption and economic development from the environmental aspect. See: James, J. *Consumption and Development.*

[71] Braudel could be regarded as an exception to this tradition. He has covered four centuries in examining consumption and economic progress. However, he has never said that his explanation is a general theory. 'We have tried to find a model, an overall view; not a general theory. We do not claim to have done so' Braudel, Fernand. *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800*, Mirham Kochan (Trans.), George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, Fontana, 1974, p. xi

preference to the former European colonies. The starting point in our analysis is the traditional subsistence economy and its consumption pattern. This could therefore be considered in one sense as the zero point of our analysis.

The conventional trade theories in economics illustrate the improvement of the efficiency in resource allocation after the introduction of international trade to a closed economy. Only the efficient production sectors would remain, while the inefficient would wither away. The excess production of the former would be exported and the latter would be imported. The total production and consumption of the countries involved in international trade would increase and the total social welfare would follow suit.

In dealing with trade flows (at least of consumer goods), international trade theories take into account the established consumption and consumer preferences. Accordingly, the consumption of dearer goods is diverted from the local sources of supply to foreign sources, while the counterpart foreign consumers divert their consumption to the cheaper local sources. The diversion of consumption in our theoretical framework might be approximated to the mechanism advanced by the international trade theories. Nevertheless, there are no provisions for the 'creation of consumption' in the international trade theories, even if we put aside 'exhaustive consumption' and 'disturbing consumption' as non-economic analyses.[72] This vacuum in the international trade theories is no more than an extension of the lack of provision for new goods in demand theory as discussed in **Chapter 3**.

The literature of economics, in addition to other social science disciplines, is not lacking in criticism of international trade theories. It is not our purpose to examine all of these here one by one. Nevertheless, we need to highlight one notable point which is more directly relevant to our analysis than any others. It is about the wide opening up of the colonial territories to international transactions during the colonial period. Not only was there not a strong theoretical foundation for the promotion of free international trade in those early days, but the international division of labour into which the colonies were drawn was a regime adopted according to the rules of the colonial game rather than a regime adapted to the possible long-term competitiveness of these territories. The only factor which conformed with international trade theories was the natural heritage -

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[72] We are not referring here the 'trade diversion' and the 'trade creation' of the customs union analyses It will be clearer to the reader who has gone through Chapter Three fully.

preferable climate or mineral deposits. The 'cheap labour' was an artificially created condition rather than an outcome generated by the relative factor endowments in these territories.

PART FIVE

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Needs of Life

Unlimited wants encourage the individual to find ways and means of satisfying them. He becomes more industrious and hard working to achieve his goals. The wants of the ordinary native in old Ceylon were confined to the basic necessities of the life. 'The ordinary folk of old were apparently a simple people, who lived simple lives. They would have marvelled at what we now call, our necessities, and in that context this subsistence economy served as the fabric which made for the well-being of the country, both in state and religious sectors.'[1] This behaviour of the native appears to have been quite compatible with the restrictive mediaeval laws in the island. 'The individual's needs were severely restricted by the native kings. His house, clothes, jewelry, shoes were all confined to restrictions. ... The law under the native monarch kept the ordinary man within the boundaries of restrictive wants.'[2] Knox summarises with great intimacy his knowledge of the native and his wants under the native rulers. 'Only what their necessities force them to do, that is to get food and raiment. Yet in this I must a little vindicate them, for what indeed should they do with more than food and raiment, seeing as their estates increase so do their taxes also! And although the people be generally covetous, spending but little, scraping together what they can yet such is the government they are under, that they are afraid to be known to have anything lest it taken away from them.' [3]

The writers on British Ceylon did not fail to make reference to the limited necessities of the native.[4] However, with the advance of modernization, new

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[1] Brohier, R. L. *Discovering Ceylon*, p. 88.

[2] Wall, George. 'Introduction to A History of the Industries in Ceylon', p.329.

[3] Knox, Robert. *A Historical Relation in Ceylon*, quoted in Wall, George. 'Introduction to A History of the Industries in Ceylon', pp. 329-330.

[4] See, for example, Administration Reports, North Western Province, Kurunegala, CO:57/51/1870; Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/176/1909; Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p.50.

wants were being gradually incorporated into the old simple life. A tropical country like Ceylon had few social and economic needs of life, but this situation changed completely after contact with the industrialized west.[5] Referring to the Kandyan people's gradually growing wants, the north western administration report remarked 'Their wants however, are so easily met, that they are tolerably independent, and have no great incentive to labour. These wants are nonetheless increasing as their intercourse with other districts and people...'[6] Brodie held that the commutation of tax would leave the natives better off than if they were on barter, as it would guide them to new wants. He surmised that commutation of tax in kind to money would create new needs among the natives, who used to live in isolated villages, satisfying their limited wants. 'The manner in which it works is probably thus:- A man knows that he will shortly have to pay to government a couple of rupees; none of his neighbours will pay him anything in cash, he therefore finds it necessary to grow something which he may sell to strangers, and he soon discovers that, *ceteris paribus,* the less bulky these goods are the better, after producing the daily wants of himself and his family; he will therefore clear a chéna and cultivate, say *sesame*. The produce he then removes to Trincomalee, and sells for cash. He now finds that the sum he has received is greater than the amount of tax which he must pay, and then wandering through the bazaar his fancy is struck by some gaudy handkerchief, some bright brass vessel, some china &c., he buys the article and returns home. The sight of these purchases gives pleasure to his household, and creates in them new desires and new wants. To gratify and relieve these, he will in the next season clear a still larger chéna, and so the process continues.'[7]

Even a casual description of imports provides a tolerable insight into the consumption practices of the native during the period. 'Early in the year the financial condition of the Colony suggested to the government the desirability of prohibiting the importation from India of certain luxuries, such as silver plate, copper and brass ware, silk and satin, pearls and precious stones, fancy articles, gramophones &c. It was deemed to be more desirable to concentrate the financial resources of the colony upon the feeding and clothing of the people. Accordingly a proclamation was published on June 21, 1918, prohibiting the importation from India, except on licence, of the goods above enumerated. Great difficulty, however, was experienced in enforcing the proclamation, as it was found that many of the

[5] Gua, K. D. 'Industrial Problem of Ceylon' ,pp. 27-28.

[6] Administration Reports, North Western Province, Kurunegala, CO: 57/51/1870.

[7] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', pp. 148-149.

so-called luxuries were actual necessities to the population, and that continued stoppage of these articles was likely to cause unnecessary discontent, as well as to encourage Japanese trade competition. Eventually, as the change of the position of the Colony relative to India improved, the proclamation was suspended in August, and finally revoked in November.'[8] 'There was an increase in the value of diamonds and precious stones imported this year by travellers.'[9]

Even the import statistics will not fully cover the changes brought about in the native's consumption during the period. 'Statistics for imports hardly demonstrate the increased purchasing power of the peasant population since no consumer surveys were carried out in the relevant period. But there are ample eye-witness reports by reliable observers of the changing of consumption goods by this sector.'[10] The development of the plantation brought many changes to the lives of the natives. The '...conspicuous influence exercised in the introduction of new tools, machinery, wage systems, standards of living, notions of sanitation, types of organisation, fashions in clothing, methods of work and educational institutions and ideas... destruction of indigenous society... inhabitants moved into new environment and adjusted their ways to the new philosophy. The changes extended beyond the bounds of the plantation areas...'[11]

In the early years of the 20th century Wijesinghe could say that '... We are no longer a contented people. Ancient customs and institutions have been largely abandoned, we are proud that we are not conservative.'[12] The old simple life had been forgotten even in the remotest places and the economic security of the family in the traditional subsistence economy was at stake as result of growing consumerism. The Uva administration report carries the following description of the peddlers who brought consumer articles to villages. 'A good deal of fraud is practiced by these hawkers by means of unjust terms and false measures. They also succeed in inducing the women to part imprudently with more of the family stock of food by the attractions of finery and cheap ornaments. The result is, that for three or four months before the next chena crops (there is only one a year) supplies of food usually run rather short, the people being ignorant and improvident.'[13] Referring to the

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[8] Administration Reports, Report of the Principal of customs for 1918, CO: 57 /199 /1918.

[9] ibid.

[10] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 348.

[11] Perera, A. B. 'Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon', p. 57.

[12] Wijesinhe, J. E. 'Agriculture - Past & Present', p. 39.

[13] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.

villager in the dry zone, the Report on the Relief of Distress remarks The ' weekly fairs had discouraged their thrifty habits of storing their grains against the coming of leaner times To these fairs come knowledgeable dealers ready to buy up rice and other grains, and peddlers displaying attractive clothes and what is known as "muck and truck " The simple villager yielded to the temptation to exchange his home-grown food for cash and the cash for little luxuries, thus exhausting his reserves by the time the drought arrived the peasants of the dry zone were on the whole in their normal poor condition but their small reserves of food were being somewhat depleted by the fairs '[14] This trend was not particularly confined to Ceylon and was common to other subsistence economies opened to the rest of the globe 'In underdeveloped countries coming in contact with a monetary economy the propensity to spend is great, especially when new goods of a more material western civilisation are available Despite the growth of the money economy and a more general practice of wage earning by the peasantry, money had been used more for consumption than for investment and the improvement of agricultural production '[15]

The Moorish peddlers were instrumental in spreading new tastes among the natives For example, Sirr says ' numbers of them perambulate the island, like our hawkers, with various descriptions of articles for sale, the richer are attended by one or more coolees, who carry their bundle of goods, and this package will frequently contain a splendid Cashmere shawl or scarf, worth more than a thousand rupees, or £ 100, according to the value of the rupee in Ceylon, and papers of needles, pins, threads, and tapes The poorer class of Moormen vend every article by which they can obtain a *price,* and frequently European produce, such as cheese, pickles, and biscuits, can be purchased of them at a very low rate '[16] Another channel that brought new consumer articles to the native were village groceries and bazaars 'The food supply of the district is indeed ample, and the number of small bazaars and wayside boutiques along minor and Gamsabhawa roads testifies to the capacity of the villages to purchase such articles of food and diet which their own lands do not provide and other luxuries and to the ease and regularity which such supplies are stocked by the traders '[17] A taste was developed for western

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[14] Report on the Relief of Distress due to Sickness and Shortage of Food, *Sessional Paper V*, 1936, p 8, quoted in Jennings, Sir Ivor *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 60

[15] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886 1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, 1961, p vii

[16] Sirr, Henry Charles, *Ceylon and the Cingalese, Their History, Government and Religion, the Antiquities Institutions Produce Revenue and Capabilities of the Island with Anecdotes Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People*, Vol II, p 340

[17] Administration Reports vol I, Central Province, CO 57/161/1905

foods, although it was not fully compatible with the economic ability of the ordinary native. '... Jams and Tinned Fruits, are very much in evidence in India, Burma and Ceylon, on the shelves of all shops catering for Western tastes. ... In Ceylon, a greater proportion of the rural population as well as the urban population purchase an occasional tin. One large distributor who sends vans throughout Ceylon informed the delegation that even the poorest classes bought a tin of jam or fruit when travelling. The pilgrims also, even the poorest of them, take a tin of fruit, although they could not afford such a luxury in every-day life. ... These two commodities are purchased equally by Europeans and Ceylonese.'[18] Whatever may be the perception of the writer, the following remarks at the beginning of political independence make clear the changes brought about during the period. 'Of that sophistication much could be written, for it is an evil thing. A gentle, courteous people are becoming rude, vulgar and obstreperous, particularly where western education prevails. The radios and gramophones in the roadside *boutiques*, the cinemas, the flocking of football matches or race meets, the tearing motor buses... things are an alien poison.'[19]

Although the majority of people bought European goods occasionally; the market for regular European goods in the island was never very large. In the 1930s the possible real market for goods in the European taste was estimated at 100,000 consumers, comprised of immigrant Europeans, Burgers, Eurasians and wealthy natives.[20] This market had gradually developed throughout the British administration and was limited mainly to the capital city of Colombo and to the cities in the plantation districts. In the middle of the 19th century there were a few good shops in Kandy where European articles were obtainable.[21] Hornandy describes how the imported European articles appeared in downtown Colombo in the 1880s. 'A visit to the business quarter of the Pettah reveals a long row of shops packed closely together, substantially built and well stocked with all the common European articles used in the tropics, and arranged quite in European style. I was surprised at the extensive variety of goods to be found in many of them, and, taken together, they were unusually well appointed for native stores. There are no petty bazaars here with impudent Madrasees bawling out at you pass quietly along," You want buy socks? " " What do you want? " '[22]

It is maintained that the effective means of opening up the markets of the

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[18] Sanderson, R. F et al, *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p. 85.
[19] Williams, Harry, *Ceylon: Pearl of the East*, p. 161.
[20] Sanderson, R. F et al. *Report of the Australian Trade*, pp. 51, 85.
[21] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. I & II, pp. 90-91.
[22] Hornandy, William T. *Two Years in the Jungle*, p. 240.

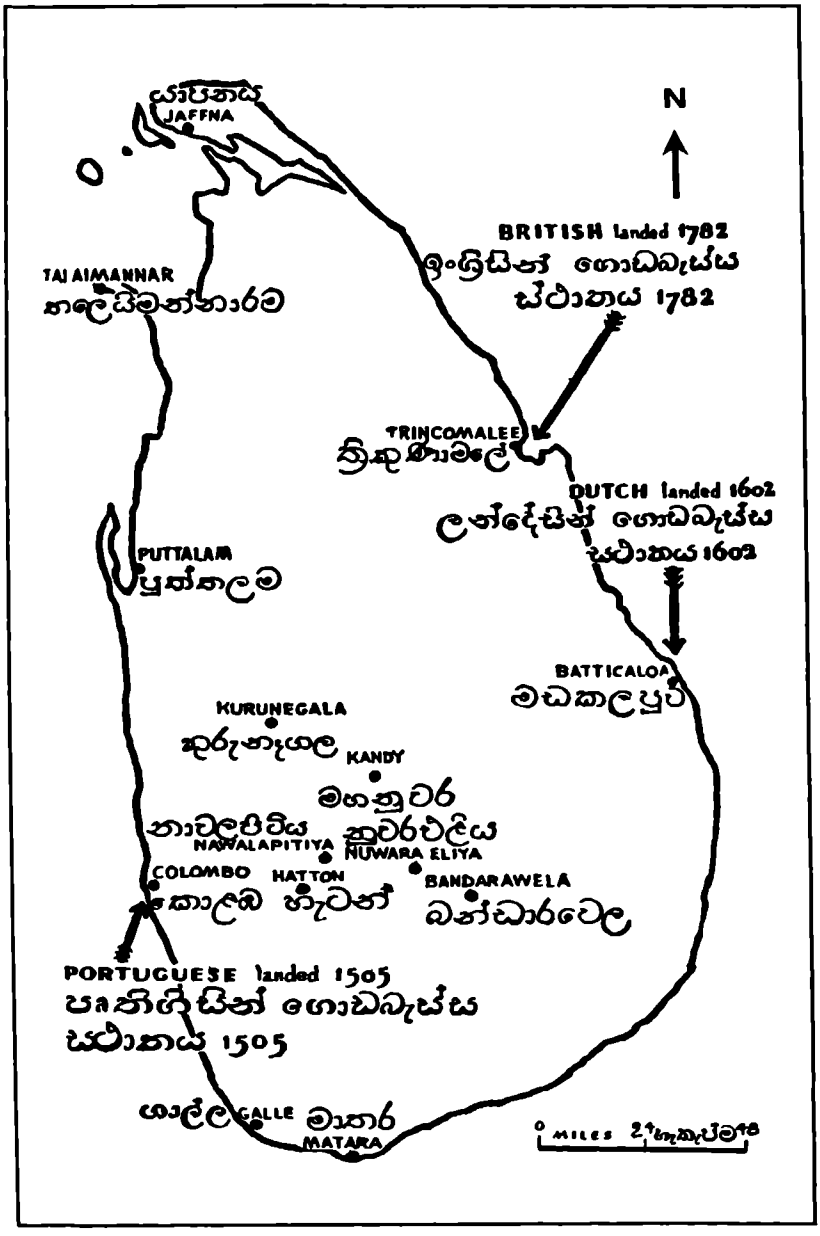
colonies was to set up westernised indigenous elites.[23] The middle class in the island was a product of the British administration. They followed the British habits of eating, attire and consumption.[24] 'Not only social habits but also in mode of thought, the middle-class was entirely Westernised in outlook.'[25] 'The Sinhalese are partial to Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham manufactures... The higher ranks indulge in the best wines which are liberally dispensed at their parties to European guests; and no people in the world set a higher value upon British medicines, stationary and perfumery; or relish with keen zest English hams, cheese, butter, porter, pale ale, cider, sherry, herrings, salmon, anchovies, pickles and confectionery, all of which they prefer to similar imports from France and America.'[26] The frenzy for consumption weakened the much-needed ploughing back of interest by the wealthy native. '...In many cases the native planters and traders show remarkable instincts of business and enterprise, extend their operations and improve their lands. In the other cases the added wealth too often finds its way to the liquor shop and in the purpose of the cheap "Luxuries" generally of European manufacture, which are now common in every village bazaar.'[27]

In general the high class native wanted to imitate closely the European pattern of leisure in the very same manner. '... the journals published the balls given by well-to-do families, the clubs, the Race meetings, the Dog carts and Phaetons, the morning coats, evening dress and top hats, the whiskered faces and coastered figures were a natural accomplishment of the language which had taken deep toot in Ceylon.'[28] The wealthy urban dwellers in the island used to occupy the neighbourhood called Cinnamon Gardens in Colombo while engaging in the European consumption patterns. 'The wealthy resident of Cinnamon Gardens who takes care to occupy his box and to provide his wife with the means to exhibit his wealth on the Colombo Race Course...'[29] 'During the 19th century, the government, officials and the elite of the towns were Christians, and a profession of Christianity and a knowledge of English became a symbols of

[23] Goldsmith, Edward. 'Development as Colonialism', p. 257.
[24] Roberts, Michael et al. *People Inbetween*, p. 104.
[25] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p. 22.
[26] Bennett 1843, p. 48 ? ; quoted in Roberts, Michael et al, *People Inbetween*, p. 70.
[27] Administration Reports - vol. 1, Report on the Blue Book of 1904, CO: 57/157/1904.
[28] Passè, H. *The English Language in Ceylon*, PhD Thesis, London, 1948, p. 69; quoted in Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p. 21.
[29] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The Economy of Ceylon*, p 176.

MAP 8

Chief Ruined Cities and Ancient Roads of Ceylon according to the Mahawansa



Source. Elsie K Cook (1931) *Ceylon Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, (Rev by K Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953

fashions and progress. An English education and Christian faith were also "the keys to lucrative government jobs", and Buddhism and, the Sinhalese language Sinhalese customs and even Sinhalese personal names were looked down upon by the Europeanized Ceylonese as "the contemptible residue of oriental barbarism.'[30] The British residents in Ceylon formed themselves as a leisure class of gentlemen by participating in such leisure activities as cricket, polo, soccer and rugby. 'The activities were institutionalized as clubs and associations. They called for appropriate and striking attire. ... Several of these games were introduced into the curricula of the leading schools in Sri Lanka. In this and other ways the games initiated by the Victorians helped induct the indigenous elites into Westernized life ways. The success of the process of Westernisation was linked with the dialectics of colonial opposition. However educated and however wealthy, members of the Ceylonese middle class were excluded from most British clubs and subject to the racial arrogance of the white sahibs.'[31]

Every native from top to bottom acquired a certain amount of money with the monetization of the economy (**see Appendix on Monetization**). The inflow of money into the households was functionally related to the opportunities that had been opened to them and their ability and desire to earn money. In many cases, the newly acquired money was not spent prudently. There was evidence among the wealthy natives of their pomp and pageantry; the poor, too, did the same thing according to their abilities. The following account is about a wealthy low caste gentleman. 'Once the wealthy Karawa, C. H. de Soysa, was permitted to entertain the Duke of Edinburgh to dinner in his home, which he did in grand style off a plate with a knife and fork, all of pure gold, the champagne and wine goblets being of the same precious metal. Upon the spoon were delicately carved wine leaves, and around the stem was worked a row of the pearls. Rows of rubies similarly encrusted the knife and fork.'[32] It is maintained that these types of consumption are '...practised particularly by persons who are moving from a lower to a higher social class, and who are anxious to be recognised in their superior status.'[33] The upper class natives desired very much to demonstrate that they were part of European and, more especially

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[30] Jayawardene, Visakha Kumari. *The Urban Labour Movement In Ceylon with Reference to Political Factors*, p. 26.

[31] Michael et al, *People Inbetween*, p.103.

[32] Fernando, Tissa. 'Aspects of Social Stratification', p. 32; For his sources the author refers to *The Examiner*, April 23, 1870, quoted in E. F. C. Ludowyk. *Modern History of Ceylon*. London, 1859.

[33] Lewis, Arthur. W. *The Theory of Economic Growth*, p. 26.

English, culture rather than the native culture. 'The predilection for English was part of and parcel of the Anglicisation of the upper class Ceylonese especially the headmen. Percival, for example, observed the great desire to imitate "the manners of Europeans." Cordiner, too, discovered that the *mudaliyars* as well as the "higher orders of the Cingalese" had already adopted "many of the customs of the Europeans.'[34] 'In industrial countries [conspicuous consumption] is much indulged in by the *noveaux riches*. In the colonial countries, where the ruling classes differ in race from the ruled, it will also often be found that the middle and upper classes indulge excessively in conspicuous consumption. This is because one form which their nationalist self-assertiveness takes is to show that they are 'as good' as their rulers, at least in being able to build equally big houses, or to drive in equally big cars, or to throw equally expensive parties. This excessive consumption often weakens the subject people by throwing them into debt, and by reducing the amount which they might save and invest in accumulating wealth.'[35]

[34] Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Education and Social Change, 1832 to c. 1900', p. 179.
[35] Lewis, Arthur. W. *The Theory of Economic Growth*, p. 26.

Appendix II

Monetization

Money had long been in circulation in the island, although it had little to do with the subsistence economy [1] Traditionally, the native's transactions were dominated by the barter system which was carried on mainly among neighbouring villages, but there were also regional patterns of exchange [2] The coastal regions were the most commercialized and modernised part during the pre-British periods Nevertheless, money was scarcely used even in the seaboard towns and had played a limited role in the island economy [3] A depreciated copper coin and paper money formed the chief currency when the British gained possession of the island [4] Bertolacci examines the degree of financial involvement in economic transactions after nearly two decades of British intervention in the island's affairs 'The use of coin and currency is now general, both in the new and in the old territory; yet, either from want of capital, or from peculiar attachment to old-established customs, barter is very much resorted to in many transactions between the natives and all sorts of agreements, when the intervention of a circulating medium is avoided '[5] The impact of money economy was not evenly dispersed over the island The natives in the remotest districts seem to have been behind the rest of the island For example, Brodie makes the following remarks about the District of Nuwarakalaviya 'Until of the late years, bare money was almost unknown in the district, but is now becoming more

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[1] The archaeological evidences suggest that the circulation of coins in the island goes back at least to the second half of the third century BC See Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon*, Luzac & Co , London, 1909, pp 459-521 and Tennet, Sir James Emerson(1859) *Ceylon*, vol I, Longman, London, 1860, pp 460-463

[2] Samaraweera, Vijaya 'Economic and Social Development under the British', p 62

[3] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886 1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp iv, 1, makes reference to Phear, *Aryan villages in India and Ceylon*, p 195

[4] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon* Vol II, p 42

[5] Bertolacci, Anthony *A View of the Agricultural Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon* p 124

common everyday. In all dealing among themselves, however, the natives adhere to the system of barter. The change already referred to, may be attributed chiefly to the fact that payment of taxes in kind has been done away with ....'[6] Instead of a uniform currency system, a number of currencies were in circulation even into the 1880s 'At present, in addition to English coin, rupees and rix dollars, worth 1*s.* 6*d* are in circulation. The copper coins are chillies, pice, and fanams.. '[7]

The development of plantation agriculture, starting with coffee is widely considered to be the major force which monetized the island's predominantly barter economy. It is related to the development of money consciousness among the Ceylonese peasants[8] The peasant became a partner of the coffee culture in the coffee-growing up-country provinces. As the development of coffee cultivation demonstrated, the Kandyans were not entirely insensitive to the economic stimulation.[9] They began to cultivate coffee in their gardens on a small scale in order to earn money. Their production contributed a considerable percentage to the island's coffee exports in some years of the coffee era. For example, during the period 1849-1869, from 1/3 to 1/4 of the total annual quantity of coffee shipped was "peasant coffee [10] The higher prices of coffee caused not only an increase in the efficiency of peasant growers, but also an increase in their numbers.[11] During the Dutch period, the maritime natives apparently accustomed themselves to small-scale coffee plantations. The Dutch first introduced coffee cultivation to the island as a commercial crop.[12]

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[6]Brodie,A Oswald 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', pp 148-149

[7] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Riffles *Ceylon*, Vol , p 42

[8] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp iv, 348

[9] Samaraweera, Vijaya 'Economic and Social Development under the British', pp 64-65.

[10] Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p 66, makes reference to C O 54, 328. 20th June 1856, Ferguson 'Ceylon Jubilee Year', p 62

[11] Vanden Driesen, I H The History of Coffee Culture in Ceylon (2)', *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol iii, no 2, October 1953, p 160

[12] The coffee plant was obviously known in the island long before its systematic cultivation as a cash crop in the nineteenth century However, the preparation of a beverage from its berries was totally unknown to the natives They only employed its tender leaves for their curries and its delicate jasmine-like flowers for ornamenting temples and shrines They were encouraged to cultivate it on a commercial basis under the Dutch The native produced coffee on a small scale under the Dutch See Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special*

However, both the coffee estates and peasant coffee thrived, not in the maritime districts where the Dutch experimented with the cultivation, but in the hilly Kandyan areas. Coffee was followed by tea; coconut cultivation also became an important money earner during this period. Rubber cultivation, the youngest and third important partner of plantation culture, was added in the early 20th century as another money earner for the native. These three crops have became the major cash crops of the island's economy since then.

In addition to the major plantation crops, people living in the wet zone had always received some money from the sale of their vegetables, fruit, areca nuts or other products. 'Coffee and vegetables brought money to the villagers. This is substantiated by increasing imports which may be classed as part of peasant household budgeting. The use of money has become a common place.'[13] In Sabaragamuwa, areca nuts seem to have been important in the development of monetary transactions. 'The trade in arecanuts is so extensive... I never saw it cultivated, but wherever there are a few trees and the locality favourable, they increase largely by droppings... They are collected in large quantities by the Moormen, who send them in boatloads to Colombo, whence they are shipped to the coast and to the Maldives.'[14] The natives occasionally received some money by disposing of their poultry or cattle. The fishing community received their money from the sale of their fish products. Opportunities were also opened for natives to sell their labour for money. The peasants who became labourers on the estates or in the towns and in the countryside itself received wages and salaries. Some of the natives became self-employed individuals, such as masons, carpenters on modern lines, or worked as craftsmen in dwindling traditional industries in return for money. In addition, new industries and services such as coir products, oil milling and communications were developed and some natives secured employment opportunities in these sectors.

The major three plantation crops had not been grown into the drier districts of the island. The natives in these districts produced a surplus of grain and forest products and initially exchanged them for other goods on a barter basis and, later on, first for money and then for other articles. The

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reference to the period 1823-1886, pp. 1-4; makes references to Tennant "Ceylon" vol. II, p. 226; Shand, article in 'Journal of Society of the Arts' vol. xxx viii, p. 181; Sirr-'Ceylon and Sinhalese', p. 157.

[13] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, 1961, p. 70.

[14] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 45.

following accounts from some drier districts reveal how the system operated. 'A good deal of grain actually leaves the district, in the hands of the Jaffna traders, who barter clothes, curry stuffs, salt, coconuts, etc to the villagers for paddy at exorbitant rates, the articles being advanced against the next paddy crop, a certain amount also is sold to Jaffna traders, whole carts are continually passing through the district.'[15] The story was very similar in the northern Mullaitive district. 'Trade is in the hands of the Moormen and traffickers from Jaffna, if the harvest is abundant, and paddy is at a high price in the Jaffna markets, the people have enough end to spare.'[16] A similar story was furnished for the north-central province. 'The People of Nuwarakalawiya bring in large quantities of kurakkan, ginger (tala), mustard (aba), beeswax, and deer horns, and exchange them for rice, salt and curry stuff. Most of the trade is done by barter, but salt can only be obtained by purchase. The produce is chiefly transported by means of buffalo tawalams; during the fine weather, however a few carts find their way here.'[17] Referring to the sesame in Nuwarakalawiya, Brodie says 'Large quantities are sold to *tavalam* people from the low country, and the dealers at Trincomalie and Higgolla, Mátalé. The people are fond of cultivating this plant, and if an English merchant would make arrangements for purchasing it here, or at the neighbouring ports, the cultivation might be increased to a great extent.'[18] Ginger was the '...crop villager relies on for making a little money with which to buy land and necessities.'[19] 'A large quantity of paddy, kurakkan, ginger and other grains are imported from North-Central Province. Both locally produced and imported rice is converted into rice by local labour, mainly by women.'[20] 'The trade in salt-fish is carried on extensively with the inhabitants of the Anuradhapura District, and as soon as the Kandy Road is completed, I anticipate a large increase in the sale of this commodity. In return for salt-fish the Anuradhapura people bring ginger, cotton and kurrakkan.'[21] 'The increasing influence of money is strikingly apparent in the instance of headmen and people of family, who now care much less than heretofore about keeping up large bodies of dependants.'[22]

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[15] Administration Reports, Vavuniya District, CO: 57/115/1891; The exorbitant rates seem to be a result of less competitive trade or high risk component of the trade or both.
[16] Administration Reports, Mullaitive District, CO: 57/54/1871.
[17] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[18] Brodie, A.Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p.145.
[19] Administration Reports, North-Central Province, CO: 57 /199 /1918.
[20] Administration Reports-vol. 1, Northern Province, CO: 57/157/1904.
[21] Administration Reports, Trincomalee District, CO: 57/62/1873.
[22] Brodie,A.Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of

'Some grain, chiefly fine grain, is brought into the province from Nuwara Kalawiya, procured in exchange for coconuts and arecanuts taken there from Dewamedi, Dambadeniya, and Katugampola.'[23] 'There can be no doubt that people prefer the grains grown in chenas to rice, and that a large proportion of the rice grown is exported. The people sell most of the rice they grow to traders from Jaffna, Trincomalee, Kurunegala and Matale, partly for money and partly by exchange for salt, salt fish, cloths, coconuts, and areacanuts. This money provides for the purchase of small pieces of crown land adjacent to the old fields under the village tanks. Tala (ginger) is very largely grown for export, and is both sold and bartered...'[24] 'In the part of the province bordering the Southern Province it is the low-country Sinhalese trader from Beliatta or other places near Tangalle who supply the wants of the villagers by taking their surplus kurakkan, etc, in barter for pots and chatties and other necessaries.'[25] The native in the drier central hill parts of the country became involved in the exchange mechanism through excess grain. 'The people look to their chena crops to supply them with all necessaries and pay off their debts, and at the time those crops are being gathered the Moor trader is sure to be found in the village with his herd of Tavalam cattle to collect his debt, and to remove the grain he receives in payment or in barter for cloths, salt, dried fish, tobacco, and other articles.'[26] On some occasions the natives exchanged their products for other goods or for money at weekly fairs.

In northern Jaffna, the natives earned their money mainly from tobacco cultivation. The export of Jaffna tobacco brought much money into the peninsula, which was used to import large quantities of grain and cloth in to Jaffna from Coromandel.[27] 'If the Jaffna cultivator has ever made any money in cultivation, it was in the cultivation of tobacco. While other kinds of cultivation merely procured him the bare necessities of life, tobacco gave him an opportunity to enjoy some measure of prosperity or to put by some provision for the future. The extension of the cultivation of the White Burley variety appears to be the only way to tide over an acute crisis that is likely to arise sooner or later by the gradual exclusion of Jaffna tobacco from Travancore market.'[28] Some of the Jaffna tobacco was sold within the

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Nuwarakaláwiya', pp. 148-149.

[23] Administration Reports, North Western Province, CO: 57/134/1897.

[24] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/101/1887.

[25] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.

[26] Administration Reports, Uva Province, CO: 57/140/1899.

[27] de Silva, Colvin R. 'The Tobacco Trade in Ceylon 1796-1833', p. 429.

[28] Administration Report, Northern Province, CO: 57 / 232/ 1931; '... merchants purchased mostly for export to Acheen in Sumatra in exchange for arecanut and gum and to Penang in Malaya for spices. The Indian market was primarily confined to

island itself and the rest was exported. 'There is a regular trade through Nuwara Kalawiya from Jaffna to Matale. An account is kept at Mihintale of the number of collies, carts, horses, cattle, sheep and c, that passes. Tobacco is the principal article taken from the North of the Island to the Central Province.'[29] In addition, the professionals working with the colonial administration brought a considerable amount of money to the district.

Monetization in the island was encouraged by the appearance of new consumer articles and the expansion of popular expectations.[30] 'As early as the middle 1850's there were indications that large section of the peasantry were becoming conscious of money, profit, markets and all that these signified.... growth of an attitude to economic phenomena that was previously of little importance in the peasant sector. Economic individualism was evidently growing stronger, its development hurried on the expanding network of roads and railways; the floods of money...'[31] Capitalist forms of production and exchange were both a cause and a consequence of the increasing monetization of the economy. 'The extension of communication, the development of cash crop cultivation, and an increase in economic specialisation obviously contributed towards this process. So did the payment of the paddy and the dry grain taxes in cash in those districts in which the commutation system was applied. It is possible that changing price relations may have contributed significantly to the process of monetization.'[32] The money created by the cultivation of cash crops opened the way to modernization in the rural sector of the island.[33] The emergence of the cash nexus was essential to the break-up of the feudal economy.[34] Ceylon was no exception to this and the new flow of currency with the development of plantations accounted for most of the

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travancore... in exchange for pepper, rice and gold... and the Sinhalese districts in Ceylon itself particularly around Galle...' De Silva, Colvin R. 'The Tobacco Trade in Ceylon 1796-1833', p.434.

[29] Administration Reports, District of Nuwarakalawiya, CO: 57/51/1870.

[30] Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p. 148.

[31] Vandendriesen, I. H. 'Some Trends in the Economic History of Ceylon in the 'Modern' Period', p.16; Makes reference to C.O. 54, 5th July 1858; C.O. 54, 332, 8th January 1858.

[32] Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p.148.

[33] Meegama, S. A. *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p. 224.

[34] Van Den Driesen, I. H. *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p.vi.

transformation of the island's social institutions.[35] The plantation economy '...endowed the Ceylonese peasant with money consciousness ... and increasing acquisition of consumer goods is only one clear indication of the developing economic trend.'[36] The monetization of the economy brought about by the colonial policies and administrative measures had transformed the island's economy into a consumer-oriented one.[37] The circulation of cash opened opportunities to the peasants '...who traditionally dealt with itinerant traders, to look for new markets and in the acquirement of a taste for European goods...'[38]

[35]Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p 57
[36]Ibid , pp 350-351
[37]Dawood, Nawaz *Tea and Poverty Plantations and the Political Economy of Sri Lanka*, p 33
[38]Samaraweera, Vijaya 'Economic and Social Development under the British', p 62.

Appendix III

Trade and the Ceylonese

The desire for trade and commerce propelled by the profit motive redrew the world political and economic map at the beginning of the modern period. 'Trade often the medium which widens exchange economies, was the main agency of transformation. ...Trade was undoubtedly an important initiator of economic change, communicating new ideas and aspiration to the people and providing new opportunities to further their economic advancement...'[1] Not every nation had shown an equal interest in trade in the past, although there was some sort of exchange almost everywhere. The mainstream of Ceylonese society seems to have not developed a sufficient interest in trade and commerce. The Sinhalese in ancient and modern times alike have shown an apathy in all matters connected with trade.[2] This became an astonishing topic for discussion during the colonial period and it was considered to be one of the factors that hindered socio-economic progress in the island on modern lines. 'The British were a nation of traders before they were an industrial nation, and long before the "Industrial Revolution"...The wool trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries caused an agricultural revolution such as has not yet occurred in Ceylon.'[3] Showing no interest in trade means an absence of profit-making motives, an inability to take risks and unwillingness to work on modern lines. As a whole, the society showed no desire to exploit the great benefits of the division of labour and exchange. Barrow makes the following comment about the Sinhalese in the middle of the 19th century.

> 'No Sinhalese is the owner of vessel larger than a fishing boat, and no Sinhalese is a merchant at Colombo or any seaport in the island... the coasting trade and the intercourse with India is carried on, being exclusively the property of Moormen, Parses, and Malabar chetties from the Coramandal

[1] Samaraweera, Vijaya. 'Economic and Social Development under the British', p. 62.
[2] Appadorai, A. *The Economic Conditions in South India*; quoted in Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: III', p. 313.
[3] Jennings, Sir Ivor. *The economy of Ceylon*, p. 95.

> coast. The native Sinhalese are equally unconnected with the internal commerce of the island, all of which is conducted by Moormen, Malabars, Parses, and strangers, many of whom come over from the coast of India for the season and return again to their wives and families. ... Sinhalese themselves see the inspiriting and enriching operations going on from day to day for the advantage of foreigners, without an apparent emotion at their own exclusion...'[4]

The natives of the island were not a seagoing race and the economy at the beginning of the nineteenth century was basically a self-sufficient peasant economy.[5] This was much more similar to the periods prior to the British administration in Ceylon. In the ancient and medieval periods Sinhalese had shown no interest to trade and commerce.

> 'Upon trade the natives appear to have looked at all time with indifference. Other nations both of the East and West of Ceylon made the Island their halting place and the Chinese brought hitherto wares destined for the countries beyond the Euphrates and the Arabians and the Persians met them with their products in exchanges, but the Sinhalese seem to have been uninterested spectators of this busy traffic in which they can hardly be said to have taken a share.'[6]

Since time immemorial India was the most important international trading partner for the island's limited trade. However, the island's trade with India was largely conducted from the Sri Lankan side by Malabari traders.[7]

> 'Ceylon, as a country of Sinhalese, is not a commercial country even at its principal port, Colombo. The number of natives engaged in trade is comparatively few, the Chetties (merchants of India) and Moormen carrying on the far greater part of the intermediate trade between the European importers and the consumer, these classes also being the chief importers of grain and cloth from India.'[8]

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[4] Barrow, Sir George. *Ceylon: Past and Present*, p.176.

[5] Gunawardene, Elaine. *External Trade and Economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, pp. 1-2; Perera says that there is sufficient evidence to show that the Sinhalese took an active part in the international trade in a limited period of time and that they had a navy; see Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: III', p. 310; makes reference to Notices of Ceylon in Tao I Chih Luch by Wang Ta Yuan, in J. R. A. S. (Ceylon Branch), Vol. XXVIII., No. 72, 1920, p. 32. & G. Goedes, Histoire Ancienne des Etats Hindouises d'Extreme Orient, Hanoi (1944), pp. 186-187.

[6] Tennant, Ceylon. Quoted in Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: III', p. 313.

[7] Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, p.121.

[8] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 31.

The Sinhalese living under the native kings did not have the freedom to engage in trade and develop money consciousness in themselves. 'The important profit making activities were a royal monopoly. ...Under the native rule, it was not safe for any private individuals in this country to possess riches, as they were certain to be seized by the ruler, or by his more unscrupulous officials in his name.'[9] The exports were either royal monopolies or controlled in some way or other by the king, and this system provided no incentives for the peasant to produce for the foreign market.[10] Therefore, the desire for trade among Sinhalese was to be developed under European rule.

The Sinhalese living in the coastal districts and the low country natives differed from the natives in the Kandyan provinces.[11] The natives in the coastal areas of the island first made contact with the Europeans and advanced through modernisation, ventured into modern economic activities and developed a money consciousness.[12] They appear to have first exploited most of the new economic opportunities opened under the British and later on by others including, trade.

> 'It is beyond doubt that the most effective use of opportunities that came their way was made only by a relatively few, and in significant number of instances, by those who were already well established in the social scale. ... It was also noteworthy that the new opportunities were exploited mainly by the people of the Maritime Provinces, not only in their own areas but also in the Kandyan Provinces.'[13]

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[9] Wall, George. 'Introduction to A History of the Industries in Ceylon', p. 329.

[10] Gunawardene, Elaine. *External Trade and Economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, pp. 1-2; Perera says that there is sufficient evidence to show that the Sinhalese took active part in international trade in a limited period of time and that they had a navy; see Perera, B. J. 'The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: III', p. 310; makes reference to Notices of Ceylon in Tao I Chih Luch by Wang Ta Yuan, in J. R. A. S.(Ceylon Branch), Vol. XXVIII, No. 72, 1920, p.32. & G. Goedes, Histoire Ancienne des Etats Hindouises d'Extreme Orient, Hanoi (1944), pp. 186-187.

[11] The low-lying broad coastal area, comprising the western, south-eastern and southern areas, is the home of Low Country Sinhalese and they had been subjected to European influence for nearly two hundred years before the Kandyans. This association affected their social and economic life and they were in a position to exploit first the economic and professional advantages offered to them under the Europeans. The up-country Sinhalese remained isolated from European influences until 1815. See: Wiswa Warnapala, W. A. *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon: A Study in Bureaucratic Adaptation*, pp. 2 -3.

[12] de Silva, S. B. D. *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 209.

[13] Samaraweera, Vijaya. 'Economic and Social Development under the British', pp. 64-65.

The low-country Sinhalese went to the Kandyan Sinhalese provinces as well as to the eastern and northern Tamil provinces to exploit the opportunities opened under the British. Some of the low country trading people displaced traditional Muslim traders in the hill country.[14]

> 'The low-country *Sinhalese* employ themselves in keeping boutiques or taverns, trading in salt, cultivating coconut gardens, &c They have to a great extent forgotten Buddhism, and for the most part seem to have no fixed opinion on religious matters, changing their faith with astonishing nonchalance at the call of interest or whim '[15]

The up-country Sinhalese who came into direct contact with modern forces much later than the low-country people seem to have shown a dislike of trade. 'To shop-keeping of every sort, the high land Sinhalese have an insuperable objection, and thus it occurs that the boutiques along the roads are all occupied by Tamils, Moormen, or low-country people. It is only in such situations that the boutiques are to be found.'[16] Similar stories have been recorded from several other provinces. The following is from the north-western province. 'Nor are the Kandyans fond of trading. For the few supplies they need they depend on the boutique keeper from the `low country' who have established bazaars within reach of their villages, or on the Moormen peddlers.'[17] It was same in the central province, where the capital city of the last Sinhalese kingdom had been located.

> 'The Kandyans have not yet taken to trade, and it is doubtful whether they are likely to do so for at least another generation The spread of education and the facilities for inter-communication may lead some of the more enterprising youths with some capital to take to it But so far it is the Moorman who, in accordance with the Sinhalese proverb, is found, like the crow, everywhere, and the low-country Sinhalese man, especially the enterprising Galle man, who have all petty trade of the Kandyan village in their hands '[18]

This was no different in the north-central province, where the ancient civilization flourished at its peak.'Every man is a cultivator or proprietor of land, and I don't suppose that there is one Sinhalese villager who is to any

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[14] Weerasooria, N E *Ceylon and Her People*, pp 54-55

[15] Brodie, A O 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p 57

[16] Brodie, A Oswald 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p 148

[17] Administration Reports, North Western Province, Kurunegala, CO 57/51/1870

[18] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO 57/176/1909.

extent depend on a trade for livelihood.'[19] 'Trade is confined to the town and a few roadside bazaars and is chiefly in the hands of Moors. Little in the way of enterprise can be expected as yet of the North Central Province villager proper; he is strictly conservative, and content if he can make enough to satisfy his modest wants.'[20]

Although the low-country Sinhalese engaged in trade, their proportion relative to the total Sinhalese population was trifling. This might have prompted the British and other Europeans to conclude that they were neither commercially energetic nor enterprising.

> 'Whilst Muslims were deeply involved in trade with India, Middle East and Europe, the enterprising Sinhalese preferred to concentrate on other economic enterprises. They lived more typically in agriculturally developed areas and were chiefly cultivators of the land in Sri Lanka. This made the business minded British accuse the Sinhalese of being unenterprising commercially. But the Sinhalese thought land cultivation was a highly prestigious form of employment.'[21]

Like the Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils seem to have not developed money consciousness at any appreciable level before the arrival of the British. 'Sinhalese and Tamils are naturally tillers of the soil and live in villages ... on their ancestral lands and cultivate the crops required for their sustenance by means of cheap and primitive implements.'[22] Nevertheless, the Jaffna Tamils, like the low-country Sinhalese, seem to have developed money consciousness before other Ceylon Tamils who lived mainly in the rest of the northern and the eastern portions of the island.

> 'Even previous to the British conquest, it would appear that the Ceylon Tamil of the Jaffna peninsula adhered to norms of profit maximisation in using well-irrigation and intensive methods of cultivation to produce sesame (ginger seed), vegetables, fruit, tobacco and palmyrah in part for the market (the Jaffna peninsula appears to have been a rice-importing district). It is not certain whether this applied to the Ceylon Tamils and Moors of Batticaloa district. It certainly did not hold true for the Ceylon Tamils in the Northern Vanni within the dry zone lowlands.'[23]

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[19] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', pp. 147-148.

[20] Administration Reports, North Central Province, CO: 57/176/1909.

[21] Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, Navrang, p .125.

[22] Stockdale F. A. 'Ceylon Agriculture', p. 91.

[23] Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p.151.

The Jaffna people exploited not only the opportunities opened up in their areas, but also in the other northern and eastern Tamil areas, as well as in some Sinhalese areas. The trade in the northern Mullaitive district, for example, was mainly in the hands of Jaffna people. 'A good number of petty traders come from Jaffna for nine months in the year, and return to Jaffna when the rains of the north-east monsoon are about to fall'.[24] Nevertheless, not all the people involved in business were Jaffna Tamils. For example, de Silva makes the following remarks about the tobacco trade. 'The history of the Ceylon tobacco trade in early British times is almost entirely the story of the tobacco trade of Jaffna ... Jaffna tobacco was produced chiefly for export, and the trade was mostly in the hands of Indian merchants.'[25] In addition, Jaffna Tamils were highly involved with trade in the eastern and north-central provinces and had considerable business interests in the capital city of Colombo. They were also involved with trade in the cities in the plantation provinces. The Tamils from northern Ceylon sought security in employment in various field of the island's administration and elite Tamils turned, not to trade, but more to the professions and to service in the bureaucracy.[26]

The modern native trading community seems to have developed with the permanent settlement of the Moors in Ceylon.[27] In about 700 AD, 'Kolamba' or Colombo became a Muslim trading settlement, one of the six original settlements on the west coast of Ceylon.[28] The fortunes of the Muslim trading community had their ups and downs during the European interventions, as they were the only potent threat to the European commercial interest in the island.[29] They seem to have developed a greater

[24] Administration Reports, Mullaitive District, CO: 57/54/1871.

[25] de Silva, Colvin R. 'The Tobacco Trade in Ceylon 1796-1833',p. 434.

[26] Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, pp. 125-126.

[27] 'Moors' was the name given to Muslims in Ceylon by the Portuguese. see: *The Muslims of India, Burma and Ceylon and the Extent of Christian Missionary Enterprise among them*, A Survey Completed on Behalf of the National Missionary Council, India, N. C. C. Office, Poona, 1927, p. 73. According to the cover page it was meant 'for Private circulation only.' Hand written addition made to 'missionary' as 'Christian'.

[28] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography*, p. 53; Author makes reference to A. Johnson, Royal Asiatic Society, No. 1, p. 537 and also G. C. Mendis, Early History of Ceylon, p. 68.

[29] When the Portuguese first arrived in Ceylon, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they found a flourishing trading station in Colombo, with a Muslim population who handled the imports and exports. The Portuguese invasion led to the destruction of the Muslim trade, especially in the spice monopoly. They were oppressed by the Portuguese, as both were competing for the same source of income. The modern Muslim farming community of Eastern Ceylon consisted originally of the refugees from

money consciousness than any other of the major communities in Ceylon. This enabled them to retain a superiority over others in most of the modern economic operations. There are many comments on their industriousness in the colonial literature. The following are a few of them. 'The Moors or Mohammedans, a most enterprising class, do most of the trade of the country.'[30] They were dispersed all over the island, and may be looked upon as the most industrious and hard-working class of the population.[31] They '...occupy numerous villages; they are locomotive, enterprising, fond of trade, and very deceptive. Their love of money is a perfect disease; they are more robust, intelligent, and bold than the Sinhalese ...'[32] They reside '... permanently or sojourning in any town or district, where money is to be made...they exhibit great perseverance in their pursuit after wealth, and traffic in every whereby money is to be made...As many of them are extremely wealthy, they are the money lenders in Ceylon, and the rates of interest which they charge in most instances are enormous...'[33] 'In Ceylon they carried on a very extensive trade in rice, indigo, chunks, cheya, &c.; and by making advances to the natives for the purpose of repairing the tanks, were the means of keeping the northern part of the island in a very prosperous condition.'[34]

Not all the Moorish people benefited from engaging in modern economic activities. Some of them were cultivators like most of the Sinhalese and Tamils, and others were weavers or fishermen, or sometimes mere labourers. For example, the Puttalam district report carries the following account. 'From Uppalawatta I rode to Sangattikulam a Moorish village...There is a tank in this village in fair order...There are about 35 acres of paddy land irrigable by the tank, of which one half was cultivated for the

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Portuguese persecution who had fled to the Kandyan areas and were settled in the eastern province by the Kandyan king Senarat (1604-35). Under the Dutch, Muslim traders were prohibited to open shops or to sell any goods openly in Colombo city, and the Dutch compared the Muslims to the Jews of Amsterdam in their business acumen. Under the British, the Muslim trading community began to flourish and they were allowed to own property in the Colombo Pettah and Fort. See: *The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 1839-1964*, p. 4; Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, pp. 109, 124-125 and Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography*, p. 70 (including footnotes).

[30] Administration Reports, 1882, CO: 57/87/1882.

[31] Marshall, Henry, M. D. *Ceylon*, p. 13.

[32] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p.150

[33] Sirr, Henry Charles. *Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. II, p.340

[34] Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', pp. 56-57.

last harvest ... the other half was not so good. Knowing the prejudices of the Moors I did not go inside their village fences, but from the look of their granaries I judged that they had a supply of about 30 to 40 bushels of paddy and 10 bushels of kurakkan. The men say that they go to seek work in the coconut gardens of Akkaraipattu. ...their present food supply will not last longer than two months, but they say they can always get their livelihood by coolly labour.'[35]

Nevertheless, as a proportion of their community, those engaged in modern economic activities, especially in trade and commerce, seem to have been much higher than the other two major native communities. '... [A]lthough the Muslim community grew prosperous, the prosperity affected only a minority. The poor classes were scarcely altered. The wealth of the community was not divided equally amongst its members. The Muslim elites were small and many of them quarrelsome.'[36] Nevertheless, it may be safely presumed that the general prosperity among the Muslim community was much higher than among the Sinhalese and Tamils.

The overwhelming majority of the Sinhalese were not involved with trade and commerce. The story was little different for most of the Ceylon Tamils who lived in the northern and eastern provinces, other than the Jaffna Tamils. A small number of Muslim people also lived on traditional lines. However, everyone developed money-consciousness during British rule to a different degree, depending on the opportunities opened to them.

Although the natives were engaged in trade, they seem to have had little or no control over the overall trade in the island, which was always in the hands of foreigners. 'Indian traders and foreigners are controlling our trade, both external and internal, to such an extent that Ceylon has little or no opportunity to compete, that these people carry away the profits earned in Ceylon to be spent in their own countries when they retire from business that they contribute little or nothing to our Exchequer even their sojourn here.'[37]

Trade and commerce facilitate the division of labour, specialisation and reaping the benefits of economies of scale. Most of the developed countries in the contemporary world had their roots in trade before the development of industries. Much has been said and written on the unimpressive behaviour of the mainstream in Ceylonese society in relation to trade and commerce during the period. But no reference has been made to the

[35] Administration Reports, Puttalam District, CO: 57/93/1884 ; (Extracts from the AGA's diary).
[36] Kamil Asad, M. N. M. *The Muslims of Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, p. 126.
[37] Fernando, Marcus Sir H 'Study of Ceylon's Economic Problem', p. 11

sufficiency of trade and commerce. The Moormen, low-country Sinhalese, some Ceylonese Tamils and Indians provided the service required sufficiently. It seems true that the small native producer subjected the native consumer to the fraudulent practices of traders more often than not.

Appendix IV

Roads and Railways

As might be expected, the development of communications had a far-reaching impact on the traditional village economy during the period under review. The immediate benefits produced in any economy by this process, such as the lowering of transport costs, increase in local production and the expansion of local markets are common to every country. Our purpose here is not to elaborate on all these points one by one; but to show that communications worked both individually and collectively with other factors in opening up the isolated village society to the international economy.

There had not been a tolerable, not to say proper, communication network in the wet zone civilization under the native rulers[1] Not even the pre-British Europeans had been able to change this situation. 'When the English landed in Ceylon in 1796, there was not in the whole island a single practicable road, and troops, in their toilsome marches between the fortresses on the coast, dragged their cannon through deep sand along the shore.'[2] The interior of the island was '...accessible only by village paths and game tracks, which precluded the transport of any but very portable and valuable commodities.'[3] In 1807, Rev. James Cordiner, chaplain to the British Governor of Ceylon could write 'Strictly speaking, there are no roads in Ceylon...'[4] The major problem in the first thirty years of the British administration was to consolidate the territory by constructing a road network, because it was the only means of reaching the interior of the

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[1] The kings of Kandy deliberately made their territory inaccessible to the foreigner by keeping the frontiers in a state of wild jungle. see Perera, Father S. G. *A History of Ceylon II: The British Period & After 1796-1956*, p. 72.

[2] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903: Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p. 11.

[3] Wall, George. 'Introduction to A History of the Industries in Ceylon', p. 338.

[4] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903: Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p. 14.

country, although the coastal areas were accessible by boats and canals built by their predecessors, the Dutch.[5] The lack of communications checked social mobility and the extent of the internal and eternal commerce of the island. Referring to the interior Sabaragamuwa district, Lewis says; 'In the absence of communication by roads, and the nature of their cultivation chiefly restricting them to inhabit secluded valleys.'[6] On his arrival in Ceylon Sir Edward Barnes '... is reported to have said that what Ceylon needed most was "first, roads; second, roads; and third, roads."'[7] Because of the relief and their small dimensions, the mostly seasonal waterways gave limited access to the interior. Roads and railways were the only viable means of internal transport. Although the following remarks refer to the drier district of Nuwarakalawiya, it seems to paint a general picture of most of the island's roads and communication during the period. 'There are no navigable or perennial rivers, and no canals in the district; and the trade of the country will not for a long time to come justify the Government in altering this state of matters. Up till the year 1845, the only road in this district was that from Mannár to Anurádhapura...'[8]

The development of roads and communications was given high priority throughout the British administration. By the end of the 1820s every town of importance could be approached by a carriage road and had been connected to the capital city of Colombo.[9] '... after a century of British rule, about 2,600 miles of first-class metalled roads, equal to any in the

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[5] Karunatilake, H. N. S. 'Social and Economic Statistics in Sri Lanka', p. 42.; The canal link between Colombo and Negombo was established by a king of Kandy long before the Dutch, although the latter usually get the full credit for the entire canal system in Ceylon. See: Ferguson, John. 'The Coconut Palm in Ceylon', p. 61; Some canals built by the Dutch were renovated or extended during the British period. For example, Brodie remarks. 'There is only one *canal* in the District, that which connects Kalpitiya [the only harbour in the District] with Colombo. It was originally projected and partially opened by the Dutch, but was only brought into an efficient state about twenty years ago. By means of it a great portion of the trade of the District is carried on; boats from the Southern Province coming up either empty, or with small cargoes of furniture, betel leaves, jack fruits, &c., and taking away salt, copperah, paddy, &c., to Negombo and Colombo.' Brodie, A. O. 'Statistical Account of the District of Chilaw and Puttalam, North-Western Province', p. 35.

[6] Lewis, R. E. 'The Rural Economy of Sinhalese', p. 32.

[7] Perera, Father S. G. *A History of Ceylon II: The British Period & After 1796-1956,* p. 74.

[8] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p.152.

[9] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in 1903: Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803,*p.11 and Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie. *Colombo: A Study in Urban Geography,* p. 75.

world, have been constructed, besides about 660 miles of gravelled roads for light traffic, supplemented by the natural tracks available in dry weather to traverse districts where as yet there is little or no traffic.'[10] The construction of railways in the island was begun in 1858 and it became a government concern rather than a private interest, as in India and Britain.[11] The railway lines were first extended to the plantation districts to meet the needs of planters and later to the other districts.[12] The extension of the railway to the northern, north-central, eastern, north-western provinces was to encourage the inhabitants in those comparatively isolated areas to foster their agriculture as well as to encourage food production and the distribution of goods, freeing the inhabitants from the clutches of a few unscrupulous traders and to connect Ceylon with India through Mannar and thereby to make a efficient passage for Indian coolies in order to maintain mobility between two countries.[13] 'The railway system, in fact, concentrated the trade of the island upon the capital ... The trade of Colombo increased as its hinterland provided both goods for export and also a market for consumer goods.'[14] By about 1930 the modern railway lines had been built in the island.[15]

To support the development of resources in the island and to increase its revenue, the British constructed roads and railways as well as restoring old irrigation works [16] 'The greatest material change from the Ceylon of pre-British days to the Ceylon of the present time is most certainly in respect of means of internal communication. If, according to Sir Arthur Gorden (now Lord Stanmore) as quoted by Charles Kingsley in "At Last"- the first and most potent means of extending civilization is found in roads, the second in roads, the third again in roads...'[17] The development of the communication network had an effective levelling impact on the isolated village socio-economic structure. 'Railways in India and Ceylon are doing more in these

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[10] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p 14

[11] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 66

[12] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon II The British Period & After 1796-1956*, pp 166-167

[13] Wickremeratne, L A 'The Development of Transportation in Ceylon c. 1800-1947', p 311 and Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon II The British Period & After 1796-1956*, p 167

[14] Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 76

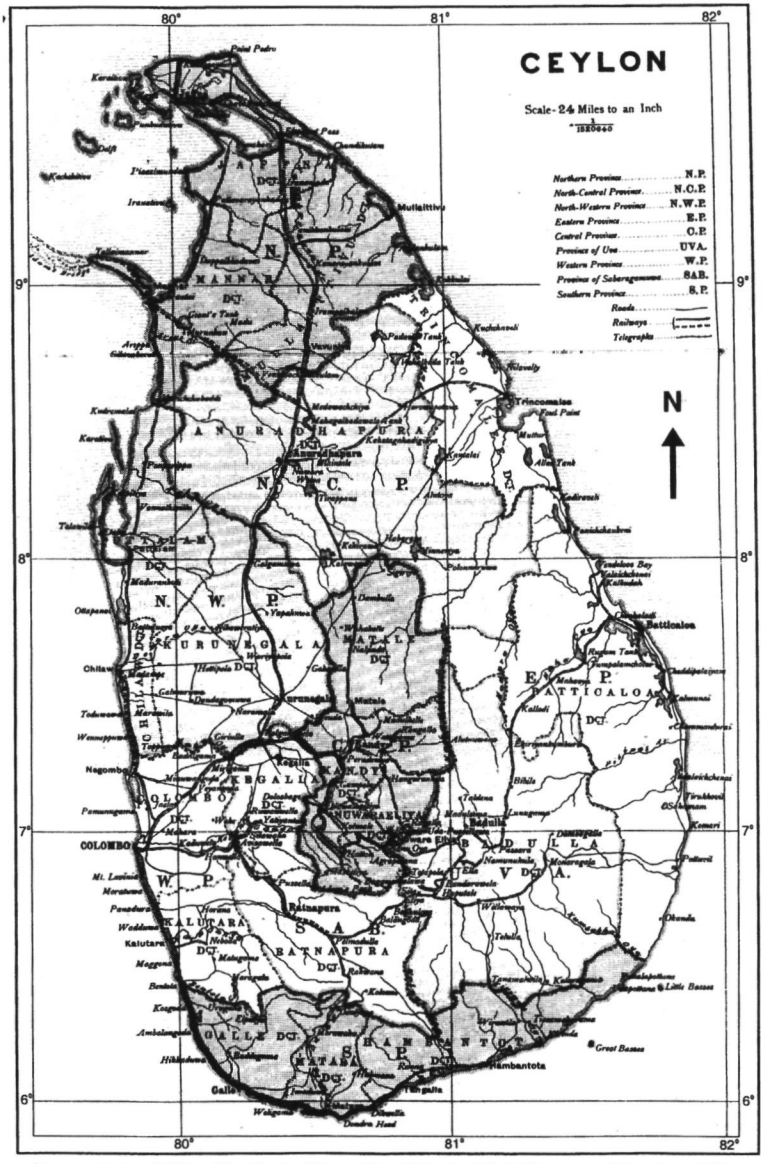
[15] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon II The British Period & After 1796-1956*, pp 166-167

[16] Mendis, G C *Ceylon under the British*, p 5

[17] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p. 11

MAP 9

The Communication Network in British Ceylon-1912



Source: Herbert White. *The Ceylon Manual for 1912-13*, A.M. & j Feruson, Colombo, 1913.

modern days to level caste and destroy superstition than all the force of missionaries and schoolmasters '[18] 'The revolution in locomotion, which it will bring about, will place the enlightening advantages of travel within reach of numbers who have seldom before left the seclusion of their native villages, and, by creating new desires and new opportunities, it will encourage habits of energy and industry, and thereby elevate conditions and feelings of the working classes '[19] In some countries, railways might have had a greater levelling effect than road transport, but in Ceylon, it can be safely concluded that both the railway and the road made an equal contribution to opening up the isolated villages and thereby altering the traditional society and economy

Some natives, in certain parts of the island, appear to have been unhappy about the invasion of their territories by the road network, bringing in people from outside localities [20] The ' intense dislike which the villagers have, to contact with strangers So strongly does this feeling still exist, that we have even now to take the greatest care not to bring roads too near to villages, as in this case the people invariably abandon their dwellings, and migrate to some neighbouring, but more secluded, spot '[21] The influence of communications, over time, seems to have overpowered the native's conservatism 'The benefits which this network of roads has conferred on the people it is impossible to over-estimate Secluded districts have been opened up, and the markets afforded for produce which previously was too often left to waste, settlements, villages, and even large towns, have sprung up, within the last sixty-five years along side roads where previously all was jungle and desolation, and means of employment have been afforded to a people who had scarcely ever seen a coin '[22]

Looked at overall, the end result of the development of communications in Ceylon was to open up the closed, isolated villages to the global economy The absence of Ceylonese capital led to the introduction of British capital and Indian labour, this ' led to the construction of roads and railways and of the Colombo harbour to facilitate the transport of their

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[18] ibid , p 15

[19] Governor Sir Hercules Robinson at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 2nd October, 1867 when the Colombo-Kandy railway was opened to the public Cited in Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon II The British Period & After 1796-1956*, p 168

[20] There were some good reasons to be discontent with See, for example, above pp

[21] Brodie, A Oswald 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p 187

[22] Ferguson, John *Ceylon in 1903 Describing the Progress of the Island since 1803*, p 15

produce. It led to the growth trade within the island and with foreign countries and the village economy expanded into an international economy.'[23] The communication network brought new goods and new tastes previously unknown to the villagers. 'The number of small bazaars and wayside boutiques along minor and *gansabhawas* roads testifies to the capacity of the villagers to purchase articles of food and diet which their own land does not provide and other luxuries, and the regularity with which such supplies are stocked by traders ... To desire to assume such articles of dress is to be deplored, but the property which permits Kandyan villagers to find spare cash for such luxuries is sufficiently evident.'[24] 'Several factors contributed to the development of trade. Perhaps the most important was the communication network established by the British. ...The removal of the internal trade barriers that subsisted during the time of the Kandyan kings by the Colonial government encourage this intercourse, and so did the relative peace realised by the British under their rule.'[25]

One of the factors which retarded the growth of local products was the lack of a proper communication network connecting producers and consumers. 'From the want of good roads the inhabitants of the coast and especially of the towns can import grain more cheaply from Coromandal and Malabar than they can obtain it from the interior of the island.'[26] 'Transport was, more than any other factor, germane to this aim, because costs on this score were not only high but tended to fluctuate. This was particularly evident with regard to the cost of rice which varied between 3sh. 6d. and 4sh. 6d. in Colombo, increased considerably in first instance when it was transported to Kandy and later when it had been transported from Kandy to the Estates. Whenever there was a comparative scarcity of rice, as happened in 1854 on account of the drought in India, the situation was considerably worse. On this occasion the price of rice in the Colombo bazaars had increased to 7sh. 6d. per bushel. The same bushel cost 12 shillings when it had been taken to Kandy and the cost as much as 14 shillings in Gampola or Nawalapitiya. The coffee planters argued that a railway and the comparatively stable freight charges in transport by rail

[23] Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon under the British*, p. 5.

[24] Administrative Report 1904, Government Agent for the Central Province; quoted in Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 348.

[25] Samaraweera, Vijaya. 'Economic and Social Development under the British', p. 62.

[26] de Silva, K. M. 'W. M. G. Colebrook: Two Unpublished Memoranda', *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. xxi. no. 2 , University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, October, 1963, pp. 158-159.

could reduce the price differential between Colombo and the plantation districts to as little as a shilling per bushel.'[27] The planter's priority was to build roads in order to facilitate cheap and quick transport from the coast to the interior and thereby to reduce the cost of imported rice to estates and also facilitate the export of plantation products.[28]

[27] Wickremeratne, L A 'The Development of Transportation in Ceylon c 1800-1947', pp 307-308

[28] Ameer Ali, A C M 'Rice and Irrigation in the 19th Century', p 260

Appendix V

Native Industries

There had always been a number of artisans in the country throughout history, although agriculture was the mainstay of the economy. Some of them produced for mass market, while others were confined to making articles for the limited privileged classes of society. The production of cloth, earthenware and ironware were the most important of the industries serving the mass market. Of these, we shall consider cloth separately, because of its greater economic importance compared with the others.

There is little doubt that all the scientific knowledge and industrial arts of Ceylon are of Indian origin and the *Mahâwamsa* mentions that craftsmen and a thousand families of the eighteen guilds were brought from Madura, Southern India, along with the Pandu princesses, who were Vijay's second wives.[1] Sandal makers, potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, stonecutters, goldsmiths and makers of water strainers for priests are alluded to 262 AD in the *Mahâwamsa*.[2]

Industries seem to have been carried out on a caste basis since very early times. Hettiarachchi points out that there were quite a number of examples suggesting some features of the modern caste system in Ceylon in the ancient periods.

> 'Modern Sinhalese castes, such as those of the *rajaka* (washermen), *suna* (lime-burners), *kumbal* (potters), and *kevattas* (fishermen) existed in mono-clan villages during the period under discussion[300-1000 AD] '[3]

This is further established by the following comment made by Chandra Richard de Silva.

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[1] *The Mahávamsa*, Wilhelm Geiger (tr.), p. 59 ; see also: An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *'Ceylon'* ,vol. II, p. 37 and Barua, Beni Madhab. *Ceylon Lectures: Studies on Sri Lanka Series No 5*, p. 14.

[2] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon*, Vol. II, p. 44.

[3] Hettiaratchi, S. B. *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c. A.D. 300-1000)*, p. 418.

> 'Caste differentiation is referred largely on an occupational basis Inscriptions and literary works refer to carpenters, goldsmiths, weavers, potters, smiths, traders, warehousemen, barbers and the like Caste status came to determine the obligations of a tenant to the state or other institutions '[4]

Artisans were hereditary and the occupation was determined by birth and there was no opportunity to turn from one occupation to another. Knowledge was handed down from father to son and skill was achieved through working.

> 'Artisans were divided into hereditary communities These occupations, often compared to mediaeval guilds, do not appear to have put their special stamp on the economic and social life of the island as the guild system did in Europe '[5]

Metalwork: The three industries - weaving, metalwork and lacquer work - have been carried on in Ceylon almost from the time of the coming of the Aryan-speaking people to Ceylon.[6] Metalwork had many branches, such as gold, bronze, iron, copper, silver work, etc. and most of the precious stones used in making jewelry.[7] Intricately worked copper, silver and utensils, iron implements, steel, armor and even guns confirm the presence of considerable artisan skills as late as the sixteenth century.[8]

Knox says; 'Here is iron and Christal in great plenty... they can make of their Iron '[9] All over Ceylon, or at least in all the Kandyan districts, the manufacture of iron and steel was once an important industry, the slag heaps marking the sites of ancient furnaces are everywhere abundant.[10] The following account explains how iron was made in the country by traditional methods

> 'Plates of iron and brass, four inches thick, and iron gates for a town, are mentioned BC 163, also iron ladders The iron ore of Ceylon, which is very fine quality, is smelted in small quantities, after a very primitive fashion, in a

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[4] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* p 50

[5] Wriggings, W Howard *Ceylon Dilemmas of a New Nation*, p 62

[6] Fernando, P E E 'Weaving, Metal Work and Lacquer Work', In Ralph Pieris (ed) *Some Aspects of Traditional Sinhalese Culture A Symposium*, Ceylon University Conference on Traditional Cultures, Peradeniya, 1956, p 55

[7] Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 337-338, makes reference to A K Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*

[8] Writings, W Howard *Ceylon Dilemmas of a New Nation*, p 62

[9] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, p 147

[10] Mineralogical Survey for 1904, Ceylon Administration Report Vol II, CO 57/158/1904

> clay furnace or hole in the earth, with charcoal; a pair of belows, made of bullock hide, and having a wooden pipe, being used to below the fire. When the iron is produced, it is converted into steel by enclosing a small portion, covered with wedge of green wood, in a clay cylinder, the ends being closed with clay. It is then placed in a furnace for several hours. The cylinder when taken out is usually vitrified. The little pieces of steel thus produced are not much thicker than a man's finger, but of very fine quality. Edrisi, and other ancient Arabian writers, speak highly of Ceylon steel.'[11]

The iron and steel making methods applied in Ceylon have their roots, as do most of the other crafts, in India. It seems that the country had produced good quality iron and steel since antiquity.

> '... The methods employed in Ceylon probably date from the earliest Aryan times, and were doubtless brought by the Sinhalese themselves. Indian (and I am told also Ceylon) steel had a great reputation in mediaeval times, and was much sought after by the makers of swords, being even exported to Damascus for the manufacture of famous weapons there produced.'[12]

The technology applied by the native artisans was essentially backward compared with modern techniques and they were not in a position to reap the fruits of large-scale production.

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[11] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon,* p. 45; A quite interesting explanation is given in the Ceylon Administration Report, 1873.
'One of the most curious sights in the district is the manner in which iron at a white heat is handled by the blacksmiths, which is kept a secret in the trade, and only practiced by that caste. The process is simple, but so repelling, that I doubt weather anyone would feel inclined to attempt it, as it certainly requires nerve to take up a ball of almost liquid iron the size of a 24 lbs. shot and hold it in the palms of one's hands from twenty to twenty-five seconds, and afterwards deliberately stunt on it for the same time. They make the paste of equal quantities of the murunga root, leaves of the bevila and kapukkanassa plant, and the tender shoot of Gurula timely ground with lime juice; and this spread over the palm and soles, makes them fireproof; for although you hear this hissing of the iron while being carried in the hands, it leaves no mark or injury when the paste is washed off'. See: Ceylon Administration Report, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO: 57/62/1873.

[12] Mineralogical Survey for 1904, Ceylon Administration Report Vol. II, CO: 57/158/1904. The report contains an excellent account of iron and steel production, methods applied with the aid of diagrams and photographs. Information is also supplied about other minerals available in Ceylon, including gems, graphite and mica.

> 'Quantities of iron exist at Kadawata, Meda, and Atkalan Korales I was in hope that a trade would spring up in this useful article; but the native process of smelting is found to be so tedious and expensive, that it does not pay the cost '[13]

The policies of the British administration clamped down on this industry as on many others At the beginning of the 20th century the industry was confined to only a few families and it was on the verge of extinction.

> 'The manufacture of iron is still carried on to a small extent near Balangoda and steel can still be made, thought it is not now done as a regular trade This appears to be the only part of Ceylon where these craft survive, and even there have only three or four families are employed in their way I have seen furnaces that must have been recently abandoned The industry has largely suffered from competition of cheaper European iron and steel, but at the present time it seems to be mainly the difficulty of obtaining charcoal, due to the strict preservation of crown jungles that is giving the finishing touches to this dying industry The Government Agent of Sabaragamuwa informs me that no arrangement can be made by which the small amount of wood required by the remaining smelters can be provided, although the smelters were anxious to obtain and pay for it It appears to me that this is much to be regretted '[14]

A fairly good number of articles based on locally produced iron and steel seem to have been produced in the past. '...all manner of Iron Tools for Smiths, and Carpenters, and Husbandmen:... Goldsmith's work, Painter's work, carved work, making Steel, and good Guns,...For the country affords plenty of Iron, which they make of Stones.'[15] Copper and brass smelting were also in use in the ancient periods. Some of the articles seem to have been produced on a par with modern advanced scientific techniques.

> '[Copper and brass] are often mentioned in the annals, and various utensils made from them -lamps, bells, cooking vessels, goblets, and bathing-tubes Lamps for bazaars, and other small articles are still cast in the island Dr Davy describes an ancient brass lamp which he saw in the temple of Kataragama, constructed on very scientific principles, showing the knowledge of the pressure of the atmosphere '[16]

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[13] Ceylon Administration Report, Sabaragamuwa Province, CO 57/62/1873

[14] Mineralogical Survey for 1904, Ceylon Administration Report Vol II, CO 57/158/1904

[15] Knox, Robert *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, pp 253-254

[16] An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, pp 40-41

At the present time gold and silver are worked into jewelry with skill, but the workmen are principally Moors, and their tools of the most primitive description.[17] The central province administration report for the year 1905 carries a description of the dying industries in the province which had thrived under the native kings.

> 'The principle industry of the Kandyans is agriculture; the minor and more delicate industries in the manufacture of beautiful articles of gold, silver and brass are practiced still in some of the villages of the districts around Kandy; weaving is still to be seen in Talagune in Uda Dumbara Potters is made every where painting find its best workmen in the Matale District and Udapalatha. Ornamental mats are made in Dumbara. At Hiyaripitiya Udunuwara I found workmen cutting and preparing glasses cut from crystal blocks brought from Ratnapura District and fitting them into frames "made in Germany" for sale in Kandy and other towns and villages. These industries had been in the hands of this family from very remote Kandyan times and a large number of glasses to suit different sights is turned out.'[18] 'The population of the province is almost entirely agricultural. The small artisan class is composed principally of blacksmiths and carpenters, who supply the implements of cultivation. Earthenware and mats are made locally for household purposes, and there are a few gold and silver smiths.'[19]

Pottery: The art of the potter seems to have had a long history in the island. He produces beautiful earthenware. The potter's wheel (*saka*) is well known and it is likely that the well-to-do families had their family potter.[20] The potter's wheel is of equally early occurrence as the plough in Ceylon.[21] The very primitive potter's wheel is still in use, turned by a man, while another moulds the clay.[22] Painted vessels are mentioned in the Mahawamsa at the time of Asoka, but it is not stated whether they are of foreign or native manufacture.[23] Knox lists the earthenware produced in the island; '...all sorts of earthen ware to boil, stew, fry and fetch water in'.[24] The potter is one of the artisans who survived through the colonial administration to the present time.

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17 ibid., p. 40.

18 Administration Report, Central Province, CO: 57/161/1905.

19 Administration Report, North Central Province, CO: 57/176/1909.

20 Ariyapala, M. B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp. 336-337.

21 Parker, H. *Ancient Ceylon*, p. 562.

22 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon*, Vol. II, p. 41.

23 ibid., p. 41.

24 Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* , p. 253.

Others: Ariyapala makes references to mediaeval sugar cane and gingili oil mills, but he concludes that these mills were chekkus worked by bulls.[25] At the beginning of the 20th century this practice was still in operation. 'There are a considerable number of chekkus (native oil mills) in the use of Kekiráwa; the gingerly oil manufactured in then sent to Mátale and Colombo for sale.'[26] It was a common practice to extract gingili oil in this manner until quite recently.

Mat weaving has been a widespread craft in the island since antiquity and the most striking characteristic of it is that it has spread beyond the narrow caste boundaries of the society, although some castes had a special artistic skill for certain kinds of products.

> 'For mat-weaving a long frame is used by the men of the Kinnara caste only, and the work performed by them is slow and laborious Sinhalese of other castes . even the highest castes, are accustomed to make and sell other mats which are plaited on the ground without a frame . In making all these Kandyan mats the women alone undertake the whole labour, which is performed in the verandas of their houses The watertight plaited flat-bottomed baskets prepared in the Jaffna district from the wide strip of palmyra leaf '[27]

The ivory carving of the country has been famous for its artistic value since early times. However, it is argued that this craft was inferior to that of other producers in this period.

> 'Sinhalese are rather clever in turning and carving ivory, but their productions are very inferior to the Chinese ..'[28]

In addition to the above mentioned industries, various wooden articles were made, such as lances, walking sticks, prettily painted with a species of lacquer.[29]

There are very few references to the ancient chemical industries in the country, but the writings of the British period provide an insight into what would have been the situation in the times.

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25 Ariyapala, M B *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 341-342

26 Administration Report, North Central Province, CO 57/176/1909

27 Parker, H *Ancient Ceylon*, pp 565-567

28 An Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles *Ceylon*, Vol II, p 39.

29 ibid , p 38

> 'The only chemical operation of the modern Sinhalalese is distillation performed with very rude implements, their still being of earthenware joined to the refrigerator by a piece of bamboo pipe, the refrigerator is a common chattie floating in a larger one containing cool water [30]

Although many references are made to an array of industries in the ancient and mediaeval periods of the country, it is questionable whether these had been developed to the standard of artistic finish and quality of the international standard then prevailing. Some hold the opinion that the Ceylonese productions were not up to that level.

> 'Peasant and town handicraft products have never been developed to the artistic and finished quality of India, Iran or Thailand Export from the island before the coming of western Europeans consisted entirely of natural products, aromatic drugs, gems pearls, and shells, of value of themselves but not the fruit of sophisticated or finely skilled workmanship '[31]

Royal Patronage: It is maintained that the artisans often received royal patronage [32] At least certain artisan groups had critically depended on the special privileges offered to them other than what they earned from their occupation. This is probably true, since not only was the local market for some of their products limited, but they were not fully dependent on their artisan skills for a livelihood. They had no international market, because of the competition from products of high quality and artistic value mainly from neighboring India and China.

> 'Both in ancient and mediaeval times the craftsmen depended on the patronage of the king and the nobles, some of these craftsmen served the needs of ordinary people too, for besides the bare essentials of life they too needed articles such as baskets, boxes, betel stands and so forth '[33]

Industries Introduced by the Dutch: The Dutch established minor industries like brick and tile making in the maritime areas[34] and started carpentry in Moratuwa and tile making in Kelaniya.[35] Moratuwa is famous

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[30] ibid , pp. 42-43

[31] Wriggings, W Howard *Ceylon Dilemmas of a New Nation*, p 62

[32] ibid , p 62.

[33] Fernando, P E E 'Weaving, Metal Work and Lacquer Work', p 55

[34] Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p 66

[35] Mendis, G C *Ceylon Today and Yesterday Main Currents of Ceylon History*, pp 58-59

for its artistic and quality furniture even in the modern period. One of the most important industries was the cloth dyeing industry in the Jaffna peninsula, which might be regarded as an older form of industrial relocation.

> 'In Jaffna the Company introduced the dyeing industry, as the district abounded in dye roots of various kinds Cloth was imported from the Coromandel coast by the Company and dyed on the Company's account in workshops erected for the purpose and under the supervision of the Company The dyes used were principally the sayam 'choy' root and various other kinds of roots obtained at Mannar, Jaffna, and the Vanni The dyed cloth was exported to Batavia and India '[36]

Dutch people and their descendants resided in the cities, mostly at the center of their commercial and military administration. The expansion of the Dutch community and their commercial activities was naturally followed by certain kinds of industries in the city of Colombo.

> 'Along with the growth of the Burger community, the industrial aspects of the town [Colombo] were also developed. Industries connected with the port such as boat building and repair, rope and coir making and other industries, notably building construction, tannery, bakeries, shoe making, carpentry, distillery and shop keeping gave the town a new functional basis The Burgers were given exclusive rights of butchering, shoe making, tailoring, baking and liquor trade in the town '[37]

Many Asian countries seem to have been much richer and prospered before the Europeans. The native industries contributed their fair share in this process, as no country had sufficient inherited hidden treasures.

> ' the empires of China, Indostan, Japan, as well as several others in the East Indies, without having richer mines of gold or silver, were, in every other respect, much richer, better cultivated, and more advanced in all arts and manufacturers, than either Mexico or Peru, '[38]

As in these cases, if Ceylon prospered in the past, it was due to human exertion. Industry was an important, integral element of the whole fabric.

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[36] Perera, Father S G *A History of Ceylon I The Portuguese and the Dutch Periods 1505-1796*, p 189

[37] Arasaratnam, S *Dutch Power in Ceylon*, Amsterdam, 1958, p 204, quoted in Panditaratna, Don Bernard Leslie *Colombo A Study in Urban Geography*, p 68

[38] Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations*, p 196

Appendix VI

Environmental Impact

Agriculture was the main source of livelihood of the overwhelming majority of the native population in the pre-European period, although there were tolerably good cottage industries and some services to meet the limited needs of the day. However, environmental problems or overexploitation of nature's benevolence were virtually unknown in the island. A delicate balance seems to have been maintained between the utilisation of natural resources and the gifts of nature. Above all, maintaining the balance between cultivated lands and forests seems to have been at the top of the agenda.

The upper central hilly part of the island was the pinnacle of environmental balance in the predominantly agrarian economy. The inter-monsoonal rain falls mainly in the central highlands, which are the catchment area of all the major rivers in the island and had been covered mostly with virgin forests before the British plantations. The following brief account is dedicated to recording the environmental impacts of land exploitation in British Ceylon to satisfy the new consumer wants in Europe. Special reference is made to the central hilly lands, since most of the British plantations were concentrated in that region. An in-depth study is required to paint a clearer, wider and deeper picture of the environmental impacts during the period, but that is beyond our grasp at this stage.

From the point of view of relief, Ceylon is divided clearly into two parts: the low country and the hill country; the former occupies about four fifths of the area and the latter the remaining fifth.[1] In the ancient periods, the upper central hilly part of the island is mentioned as the wild uninhabited forest country where people took refuge during the wars and famines and lived on wild products.[2] However, the lower hilly areas seem to have been inhabited by some natives since antiquity. 'In the Kandy district the area around Kandy, Gampola and Teldeniya have been populated in pre-Christian

[1] Cook, Elsie K. *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p. 84.

[2] de Silva, W. A. 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', p. 63.

time'[3] It is reasonable to think that only a very limited number of people may have been settled during these periods, while the upper hilly areas remained uninhabited. 'In some parts of the mountainous region such as Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts there is no evidence to show a permanent population prior to the tenth century AD ... Even in thirteenth century some parts of the upper mountainous region remained uncultivated and unpopulated. ...'[4]

The European invasions forced the natives to relocate their kingdom in the central hilly forest for their own survival. 'Indeed, until the arrival of Europeans in Sri Lanka the major area of settlement in the hill country seem to have been in the areas under 3000 feet in height. However, in the seventeenth century when the conquest of low lands by the westerners confined indigenous political power to the mountainous region, the central high land region began to play a key role in the preservation of indigenous culture and tradition.'[5] In this defensive withdrawal, the Kandy and Uva regions in the mountains were important. In many respects these two regions are considered as regions of transition between the higher hill country and the lowlands.[6] The relocation of the native kingdom in the transition hilly part had not put much pressure on the land; the upper hilly area mostly remained intact as it had been for centuries in the past. 'The Kandyan Kingdom, of which the Central Highlands were a part, was recorded to have 257,000 and 295,000 persons, possibly underestimates, at censuses conducted in 1821 and 1824-27 respectively. While there were concentrations of population around the towns of Kandy, Matale and Gampola, *in general* there does not seem to have been any population pressure on the land.'[7]

At the time the British first came to the island, a considerable part of the island was a panorama of hills and mountains.[8] It had the most beautiful and varied tropical forests in the world.[9] The conquest of the Kandyan kingdom by the British and its subsequent invasion by plantations put much pressure on the lands in transitional regions first. 'The mountain ranges on all sides

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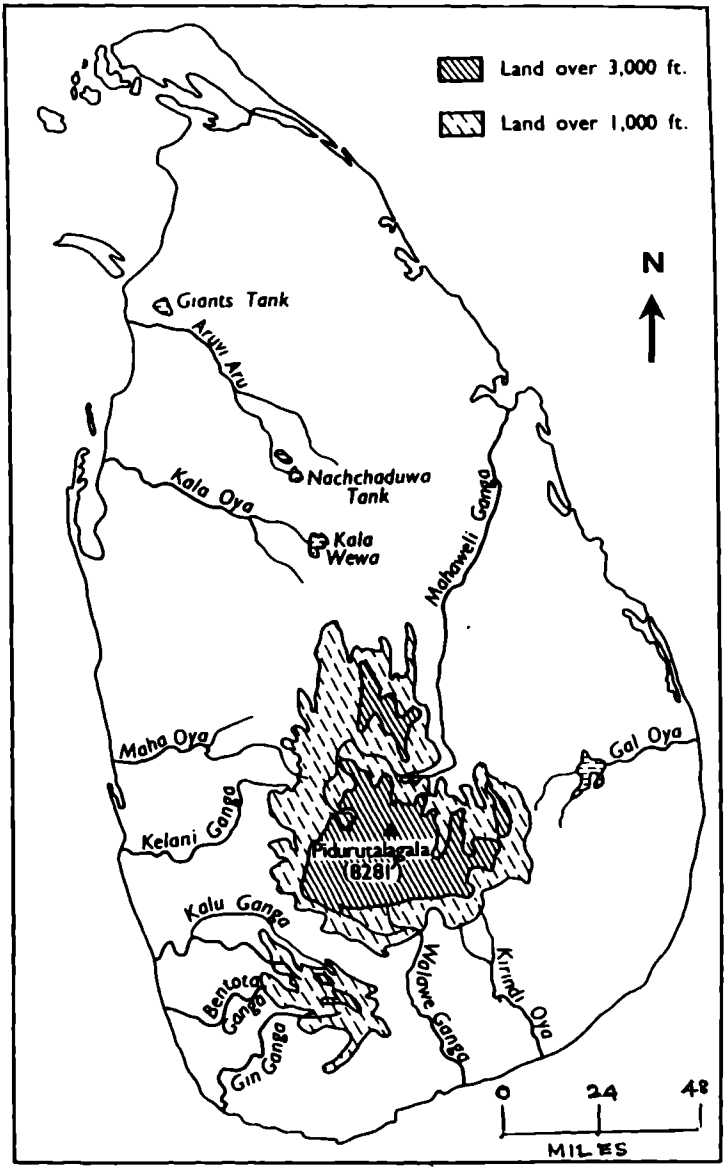
[3] Hettiarachchi, S. B. *Social Conditions in Ceylon (c., A.D. 300-1000)*, p. 226.
[4] ibid., p. 227.
[5] de Silva, Chandra Richard. *Sri Lanka: A History*, p. 11.
[6] Johnson, B. L. C. *South Asia: Selective Studies of the Essential Geography of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1969, p. 154.
[7] Roberts, Michael. and Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', p. 96.
[8] Perera, A. B. *Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon*, p. 52.
[9] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p.319.

MAP 10

Ceylon: Relief and Rivers



Source Johnson, B C L *South-Asia. Selective Studies of the Essential Geography of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd , London, 1969

of Kandy became rapidly covered with plantations. It was estimated that £3,000,000 were invested between 1837 and 1845.'[10] A good number of the early coffee plantations carried out on peasants' chena lands in the central hilly lands were economic failures. The pioneer coffee planters subsequently achieved successful results by turning to the virgin forest and moving up the hillsides to higher elevations.[11] The invasion of the upper hilly lands by the plantations created far-reaching environmental problems in the island. 'In the hill tracts in the centre of Ceylon, an area which is now covered with the tea gardens, the original forest canopy was removed to make room for coffee which later gave place to tea. Little or no provision was made at the time to retain *in situ* the fine soil of the original forest and consequently the loss of soil of the original forest has been enormous and is still going on.'[12]

The invasion of the traditional system in the hill country by the plantations struck a damaging blow to its stability there, it destroyed the balance that existed between highland and cultivation and other use of forest land.[13] The fundamental limiting factor in Ceylon as far as agriculture is concerned is rainfall.[14] The clearance of hill forest appears to have reduced the annual rainfall and also the productive rain in the region. 'There can be no doubt that the extensive denudation of the hills and mountain slopes which the progress of coffee planting has effected, renders the climate of the province much drier than it was twenty years ago. It is not difficult to suppose that the mean temperature of the air has also been raised by the same cause, and this increase in the dryness and warmth of the climate must doubtless be owing to the circumstance that the cultivation of coffee is now carried on an altitude where it would have utterly failed a few years ago.'[15] A similar account was given a few years later by a former officer of the Ceylon Rifles. 'Since the extensive clearance of the forest in the vicinity for coffee plantations the climate appears to have undergone a change, and will doubtless change still more. There is much less rain than formerly, and the

[10] *Vide* Tennent vol. 2, pp. 230-231 Quoted in Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission, *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1951, p. 68.

[11] Roberts, Michael. and Wickremeratne, L. A. 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', p. 94.

[12] Howard, A. Notes of Soil Denudation and Drainage, *India Tea Association publication*, no. 2, Calcutta, 1917, p. 14; quoted in, Sessional paper III-1931, CO: 57 / 233/ 1931.

[13] Sarkar, N. K. and Tambiah, S. J. *The Disintegrating Village: Report of a Socio-Economic Survey Conducted by the University of Ceylon, Part I*, p. x.

[14] Johnson, B. L. C. *South Asia: Selective Studies of the Essential Geography of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon*, p. 142.

[15] Administration Reports, Central Province, Kandy, CO: 57/54/1871.

temperature is higher; mosquitoes and sparrows are common here now, although quite unknown to older inhabitants.'[16] After a century of the British rule, the forest and jungle had disappeared, the land was owned by British joint stock companies and was planted with tea and rubber and a fair amount of cocoa.[17]

The clearance of high forests for the plantations exposed the virgin land to soil erosion.[18] Soil erosion and floods were two factors which affected the peasant agriculture and arose as a result of the deforestation of the hillsides by the plantations.[19] Thwaites, the director of the Peradeniya botanical garden, made the following comments in 1873 about the climatic effect of the plantations. 'It must have made itself painfully evident in the island that great changes have been brought by the deforesting of the large areas of land particularly so in the central districts. From the deforesting has resulted much washing away of valuable surface soil which cannot be replaced, and which has found its way into the rivers injuriously interfering with native cultivation.'[20] A. W. Hall, the director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew warned the Ceylon government in 1928 'your island seem to be slowly washing into the sea.'[21] Soil erosion in the up-country caused floods in the low country, and irrigation works silted up.[22] Jennings accepts that up-country plantations were one of the factors disrupting the progress of the paddy cultivation in the island. 'No doubt that in the process there has been soil erosion which has done harm to paddy-fields in the lower reaches of the river...'[23] Referring to the indiscriminate destruction of forests on the hill slopes by the British planters, Kelegama says; 'Floods, earth slips, drying up of water sources and silting of tanks and streams are

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[16] A Officer, Late of the Ceylon Rifles. *Ceylon*, vol. ii, p. 6.

[17] Perera, A. B. *Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon*, p. 52.

[18] Kelegama, J. B. 'The Kandyan Peasantry Problem', *The Ceylon Economist*, Vol. III, No. 3, 1952, pp. 190-191.

[19] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, pp. 339-340.

[20] Wickramasinghe, S. A. *The way ahead*, p. 29-31, quoted in Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 340.

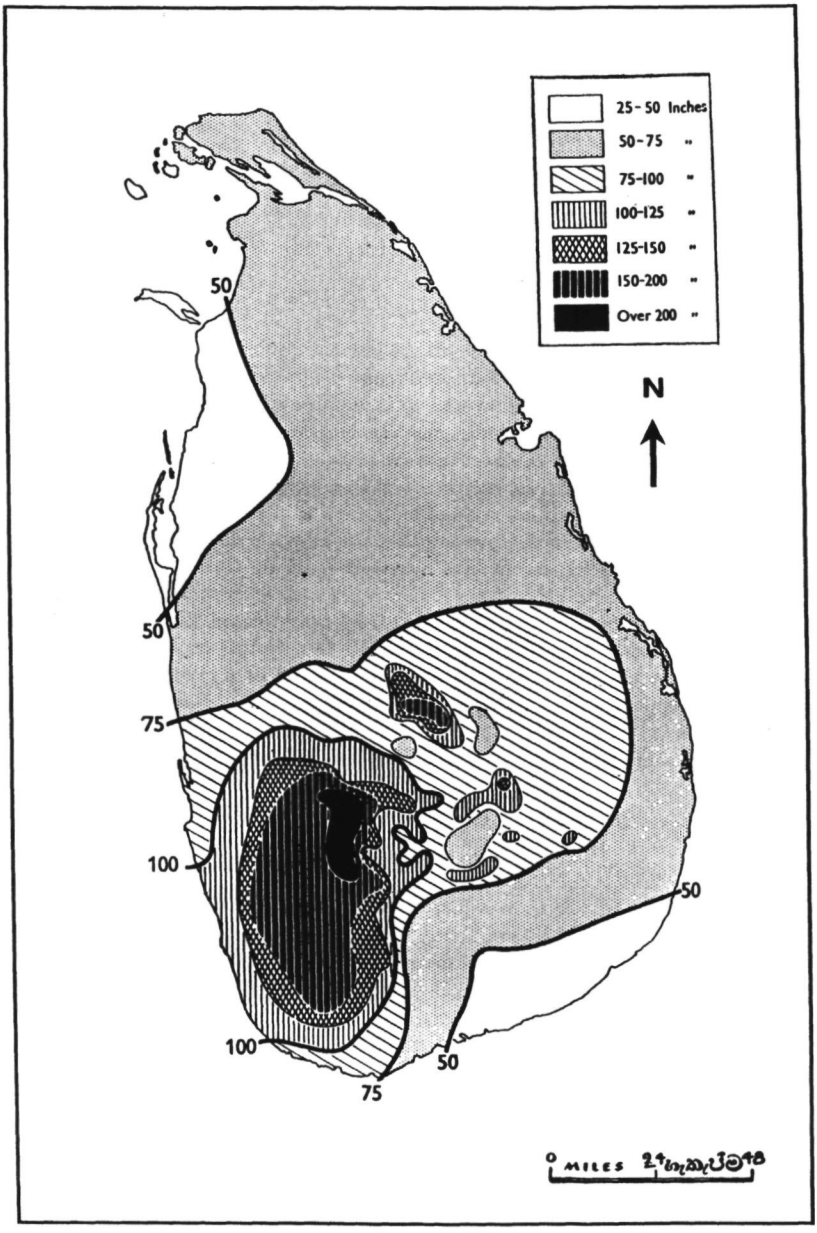
[21] Wickramasinghe, S. A. The way ahead, p. 34, quoted in Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 340.

[22] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p. 341; makes reference to S. A. Wickramasinghe, *Ceylon Economist*, June, 1951, p. 360.

[23] Jennings, Sir Ivor , *The Economy of Ceylon*, p. 31.

MAP 11

Average Annual Rainfall of Ceylon



Source. Elsie K. Cook (1931). *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People,* (Rev. by K. Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953.

all the unfortunate result of destruction of highland forests. ... Many tanks and streams in the Kandyan villages have either silted or dried up.'[24] The European agricultural practices seem to have created similar disadvantageous conditions in many tropical regions. 'Deep ploughing and clean weeding, however, destroy tropical soils, either by allowing the sun's rays to bake the soil and destroy the humus and useful micro organisms, or else by allowing the rain to wash away either the soil itself or valuable nutrients.'[25] In Ceylon, the unplanned clearance of forests for the plantations brought havoc to the island's environment, tons of soil continue be washed away into the sea even to this day.[26] The European plantations were mainly confined to the central hilly lands and the rest of the island suffered environmental impact mostly from the natives' practices. The slash and burn or *chena* cultivation practiced by the natives was one of them. It was widely criticized as environmentally disastrous during the period. When the population of the island was at a certain fixed level and the wants of natives were limited this method of cultivation had its own long-term equilibrium. 'The felling and burning of the scrubs is a form of manurial process well suited for chena cultivation which had been practised by the villagers for centuries; neither pressure of population nor scarcity of land militated against its adoption; it afforded a supplementary diet to rice ... .'[27] The increasing pressure of population and its growing needs took its tall in the expansion of chena cultivation, leading to climatic changes in the drier districts. 'It is a common remark of the people, that droughts are much more common now than they used to be twenty or thirty years ago, and this is - justly, as I believe - attributed to the great extension of the chena system, whereby pools, springs, and marshes are dried, and large surfaces exposed to the burning rays of the sun.'[28] Much more land was cleared for chena cultivation during the rest of the British period and there was no viable force operating to arrest this evil practice in the colonial economy. The colonial administration failed to provide sufficient basic infrastructure facilities for the cultivation of paddy and insufficient employment opportunities were created to absorb the growing native labour force. Nevertheless, Wijesekera maintains that the deforestation of the island was much more attributable to European plantations than to the natives' slash and burn cultivation.[29]

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[24] Kelegama, J B. 'The Kandyan Peasantry Problem', pp. 190-191.
[25] Lewis, Arthur W. *Growth and Fluctuations 1870-1913*, p. 202
[26] Dawood, Nawaz. *Tea and Poverty* ., p. 54
[27] Weerasooria, N. E. *Ceylon and Her People*, p 206.
[28] Brodie,A.Oswald'Topographical ... District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p.154
[29] Wijesekera, N. D. *The People of Ceylon*, p 139.

The ordinary native was not accustomed to most of the consumer durables, such as furniture in his house, prior to the British. Now furniture was becoming popular and many trees were being felled for the purpose without being replanted. Not only the trees in wild were felled, but also the useful trees in the native's garden which provided him with valuable seasonal foods. 'The wasteful felling of jak trees for timber purposes, which is carried on in the district on a large scale by low-country traders, affects a source of food supply much utilized by the poor man.'[30] In addition, the colonial government itself carried out logging operations in the lowland forests without replanting. '... I have just completed the felling of 1,000 logs of ... The chief work done during the year was the felling of 150 tons of ebony for sale in the Colombo market ...'[31] 'The export trade in timber - apart from ebony - is considerable, such as satin wood, palmyra, tamarind, &c., a total average of £ 20, 000 per annum.'[32]

The native in the wet lowlands drained water from marshy lands and swamp paddy fields for rubber and coconut cultivation and this reduced the groundwater level, having long-term effects on the climatic conditions in the island. One of the southern province administration reports caries the following reference to the changes in climatic conditions probably due to this reason and some others. Four Graverts and Akmimane Mudaliyar '...mentions that there is growing abandonment of paddy fields in that part due to people engaging in other works and climatic changes.'[33] During this period gem mining was put on an increasingly commercialised footing and graphite mining became part of the export economy. In comparison with other colonies, mining was negligible in the island. However, these mining enterprises had at least some localised effects.

The traditional land utilisation was quite opposite to the colonial practices. The old traditional village, the basic unit of human settlements in pre-British Ceylon, was characterised by long-term inbuilt sustainability. 'The high land which could not be converted into paddy fields because of the lack of water was used by the villager to build his home, to plant fruit trees and grow vegetables and other crops. The forests at a still a higher level and the waste lands played a vital part in the village economy both directly and indirectly. They provided the peasant with pasture lands for his cattle, with fuel for his household needs and with leaf-manure for his paddy fields. Indirectly this helped him by ensuring adequate rainfall, prevent soil

[30] Administration Reports, Kegalle District, CO: 57/204/1921.
[31] Administration reports, Report of the Conservator of Forests, Northern Province, CO:57/73/1877
[32] Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, pp. 87-88.
[33] Administration Reports, Southern Province, CO: 57/137/1898.

erosion, and maintaining his cattle which provided him not only with working power but also with manure to increase the productivity of his soil.'[34]

On the national level, the native rulers maintained environmentally-friendly policies in the use of natural resources. It is maintained that the Sinhalese kings paid a good deal of attention to the forests and they maintained forest reserves and also planted trees.[35] In the Kandyan period there were forbidden forests or *thansi kale* in almost every province, in which no chena cultivation was allowed.[36] Among Europeans, the Dutch seems to have had some interest in maintaining the environmental balance in the island. 'The Dutch were, with regard to the protection of timber, and also in some other respects, much more provident than the English have shewn themselves; they planted teak forest - we sell them for a tithe of their value...'[37]

The introduction of commercial cultivation had a destructive impact on the natural vegetation in many parts of the world. 'Western man introduced plantation agriculture, initially to grow spices, later to grow other cash crops, with coffee, tea, rubber, and oil palm predominating. This led to a great expansion in the area of open, disturbed habitats in which weeds flourished.'[38] In many instances European administrations failed to keep the balance between forest and utilisation of forest lands, since they had little or no knowledge about the tropical environment in the early days of their rule. 'As each new European Government assumed control its officials were confronted with the formidable difficulty of dealing with a completely new series of plants, entirely different from those to which they had been accustomed in Europe. ... Their interests were mainly focused upon the commodities which were useful for trading purpose...'[39] In pre-European Ceylon; the depletion of forest and related environmental issues were out of

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[34] Sarkar, N. K. and Tambiah, S. J. *The Disintegrating Village: Report of a socio-economic Survey Conducted by the University of Ceylon, Part I*, p. x.

[35] Cook, Elsie K. *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p. 197.

[36] Kelegama, J. B. 'The Kandyan Peasantry Problem', pp. 190-191; For the Sinhalese forest laws during the Kandyan period and different kinds of *chènas* and crops cultivated on them, see: Pieris, Ralph. *Sinhalese Social Organization*, pp. 46-49.

[37] Brodie, A. Oswald. 'Topographical and Statistical Account of the District of Nuwarakaláwiya', p. 140; it was only towards the end of the 19th century that the Ceylon Forest Department made rules prohibiting the sale of Crown forest above 5000 feet or on the ridges of mountains or banks of rivers below that height. see: Ferguson, John. *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*, p. 135.

[38] Whimore, T. C. and Burnham, C. P. *Tropical Rain Forests of the Far East*, pp. 219-220.

[39] Cook, Elsie K. *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Resources and Its People*, p. 197.

the question. Before the introduction of commercial crops, large-scale plantations and the logging to the island, the forest was an unlimited resource. This was the era when the utilisation rate hardly ever exceeded the regeneration rate.

Appendix VII

The Native's Link with the Plantation

The plantation, popularly referred to as the modern sector, was the centre of gravity of the colonial economy and all other activities on modern lines rotated around this sector. It is widely believed that the native, from the traditional sector, had few or no links with the plantation during the period. This led some scholars to apply the classic hypothesis of 'economic dualism' to colonial Ceylon. 'Before independence, the Ceylon economy was a very typical dual economy with traditional and modern sectors existing side by side in virtual isolation. ... all capital imported from abroad...mainly Indian labourer was employed on the estates... Land was in fact the only factor of production which could not imported...'[1] In addition to the land, labour was the only production factor that could have been procured within the country for the plantations. But it was not so readily forthcoming as expected and this led to thousands of Indian labourers being brought into the island. In this brief account we shall attempt to discover why the native did not respond to the money wages offered to him by the plantation and whether this was an irrational reaction.

Although the subsistence village economy was being opened up and linked to the international economy, the native's strong bond to the village could not be easily loosened. He appears to have not been sufficiently impressed to respond positively to money wages offered by the plantations. The individual peasant was indifferent to the philosophy of money, continued to cultivate his little holding and turned a deaf ear to the offer of wages.[2] 'Almost all moreover refused to work for hire, though representing

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[1] Richards, P and Stoutjesdijk, E. *Agriculture in Ceylon until 1975*, p. 17; For an extensive discussion of the pro-dual economy model for the Ceylon economy see: Snodgrass, Donald R *Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transition,* 1966.

[2] Vandendriesen, I. H. 'Some Trends in the Economic History of Ceylon in the 'Modern' Period', p.6; makes reference to: C.O. 54/ 315. 8th June, 1855; J. E. Tennent, Ceylon(1860), 'Ceylon' Vol. II, p. 233 ; C.O. 416, 2 Questions 28-30, Agent of Seven Korales; ibid. A 8. Q.54. Matale Agent, C.O. 54 /235, 21st April 1847; J. Steurt 'Notes

themselves to be starving and though work was offered them almost at their own doors.'[3]

There was sufficient economic and social backing for this apparently extraordinary behaviour of the native and such attitudes cannot simply be branded as aversion or antipathy to money wages.[4] 'The most important reason for the antipathy of the Sinhalese for working on the coffee plantations, however, resulted, from the fact that almost every individual in the country was possessed of some land. Those holdings though small, generally sufficed to provide their owners with every need, and consequently gave to them a considerable degree of economic independence.'[5] The wages offered by the plantations were not sufficient incentives to the native farmer to move from the traditional to the modern sector.[6] And their general economic conditions did not force them to work full time on the plantations. 'In England the study of Statesmen is to find employment for the poor: while in Ceylon the difficulty is to find poor to employ.'[7]

Why did Indians come all the way to central Ceylon to work on the plantations? Immigrant Indian labourers worked for the low wages offered by the plantations, as their living standard in their own country was below that of the Ceylonese. 'It is significant that the Ceylonese both Sinhalese and Tamil refuse to work at the wages paid to the Indians, hence the need

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on Ceylon', p 73, R Pieris - 'Society and Ideology in Ceylon during a Time of Troubles 1795-1850', *University of Ceylon Review*, X (January, 1952), 80-81 and Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p vi

[3] Administration Reports, Matale District, CO 57/76/1878.

[4] The selling of labour among the Sinhalese seems not have been uncommon in the wet-zone civilisation Ariyapala mentions hired labourers in addition to the domestic servants and slaves in the mediaeval period and sometimes these workers received hardly enough to fill their stomachs even after working from morning to evening Payments were made in money or in kind He surmises that the number of such labourers was much higher and that they were exploited to great extent by the rich He also refers to unemployed people Nevertheless, after a few centuries, referring to the Kandyan kingdom, Peiris maintains that there were few wage labourers (*Kulikarayo)* and that they were ranked low in the social scale see Ariyapala, M B. *Society in Mediaeval Ceylon*, pp 341-342 and Pieris, Ralph 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p 67

[5] Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p 177, makes reference to C O 416, 2 A 1

[6] Richards, P and Stoutjesdjik, E *Agriculture in Ceylon until 1975*, p 17

[7] Stuart, J Notes on Ceylon p 73, quoted in Van Den Driesen, I H *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, p 178

for the importation of the latter. This confirms the opinion which must be formed on the information supplied herein that the standard of living, poor though it may be, is definitely higher than in India.'[8] The higher wages and higher living standard in Ceylon attracted many Indian labourers to the plantations; in 1927 real wages on the plantations were 100 per cent higher in Ceylon than the wages of rural labourers in Southern India.[9] However, the wage level on the plantations was usually lower than the rate of earnings in the peasant sectors.[10] If this is true, the opportunity cost of working on the plantation was higher than that of working on the peasant's own land. On these grounds, it was irrational for the peasant to work on the estate until the earnings from his own land fell below the wage rates on the plantation. This happened at the later stages when the diminution of cultivable land and the growing population exerted a mounting pressure on the village economy, especially in the wetter districts of the island.

There were, in addition, some disturbing factors within the plantations themselves which may have discouraged the native from becoming a regular labourer. '... Sinhalese were not averse to wage labour as such but to their being absorbed into the plantation system where the labourer was held virtually under dues, and where for several decades planters defaulted on wage payments, the labourers were subjected to fraudulent practices of Kanganies or labour contractors...'[11] The freedom enjoyed by the villager working on his own plot of land was absent on the plantation. The employer-employee relationship was semi-feudal in nature.[12] In addition, the labourers were physically ill-treated by beating and whipping; a high portion of estate superintendents were either ex-servicemen, or boys fresh from school,[13] so that the satisfaction that might have been derived from the money wages was lower than the dissatisfaction generated by working on the plantation under such poor conditions, even if the wage rates were higher than the earnings from their own lands.

Nevertheless, the natives did not always decline the opportunities offered to them by the plantations. 'Where the villagers are nearer the estates, it is

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[8] Sanderson, R. F et al,. *Report of the Australian Trade Delegation*, p. 45.

[9] Butler, Harold. 'Problems of Industry in the East with Special Reference to India, French India, Ceylon, Malaya and the Netherlands Indies', *Studies and Reports Series B (Economic Conditions)*, No. 29, International Labour. Office, Geneva, 1938, p.36 ; makes reference to Gore, Ormsby W. G. A. *Report on Malaya, Ceylon and Java*, 1928, p. 79.

[10] de Silva, S. B. D. *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, p. 210.

[11] ibid., p. 210.

[12] ibid., p. 344.

[13] Van Den Driesen, I. H. *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*, pp. 200-201.

gratifying that the employment of village labour on estates is becoming more common.'[14] On occasions they were forced by crop failures or financial need to work on the plantations. The native '...was always willing go and earn cash on the estates when the need arose.'[15] The following refers to one such occasion. 'There was some distress in Walapane principally among women and children, in the latter part of the year, when the paddy crop came to an end, the men having left the villages in search of employment on estates, and the rest of the family remaining to shift for themselves.'[16] On the official side, the colonial government introduced some regulations to force the villager to earn money income instead of the income in kind he had been used to, thereby forcing him to work on the plantation or elsewhere. The natives for their part developed money consciousness with the commercialization of the economy.

> ' the want of money to pay their tithe and road tax inducing an increasing number of villagers in the vicinity of European plantations to seek employment thereon, several planters have brought to my notice this interesting fact, which we may hope, will prove a safeguard against failure of labour when sudden increase in the cultivation of tea begins to tell, as it must very soon, on our labour supply from India Sinhalese labourers are easily managed and give no trouble, if paid weekly wages and allowed to return at the close of each day to their homes outside the estate '[17]

With the maturity of the plantation economy, and especially with the expansion of tea and rubber plantations, Ceylonese were ready to supply their labour. The socio-economic conditions have been matured enough for this purpose. As a result, a gradually increasing number of villagers were prepared to sell their labour to the estates for money wages.

> 'I look upon the now constantly progressive extension of the tea plantation in the low country as a most fortunate provision for the Sinhalese villages, in the event of any failure of the local rice crops, where the employment that would be available would probably sufficient to maintenance of the greater part of its indigenous population Hitherto the acquisition of money has been to the generality of Sinhalese villages in the interior an unknown pursuit, they have gone from year to year content to derive from the produce of their lands just the scanty

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[14] Administrative of the Government Agent, Nuwara Eliya district, 1885, p 42, Colombo, 1885, quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development*, p 106

[15] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, 348

[16] Administration Reports, Nuwara Eliya District, CO 57/101/1887

[17] Administration Reports, Central Province, CO 57/99/1886

> means necessary for such an existence as they lead and without a slightest attempt, or even desire, to better their condition. The villagers in the neighborhood of the estates, however, now beginning to find that the leisure of which they possess so ample a store may be converted into money, and money into articles of personal comfort and experience which, although sometimes degenerating into excess, is, as a rule, healthful and civilizing.'[18]

The most spectacular fact was that the native became accustomed to selling his labour for irregular work on the estates with the arrival of the plantations. There were occasions on which the natives acted as carriers, forest clearers, factory helpers, erected buildings and worked part-time on the neighbouring estates to supplement their incomes.[19] Similarly, as time passed, the Ceylonese became interested in providing trading and transport services to the plantations.[20]

The regular plantation labourer, more especially in coffee and tea and, to some extent, in rubber, had to dwell on the estate where he worked. Only a negligible number of native families became residential labourers in this manner. The traditional average village family was content with a long-term self-reliance level of earnings. It was either equivalent to or just above the average minimum subsistence wage. At any given point in time, not every family existed at the average minimum self reliance level; some lived at a higher level, while others survived at a lower level or on average earnings. If the seasonal earnings of a family fell below the minimum subsistence level, it was supported by the families with above average earnings advancing produce on the understanding that it would be returned in subsequent cropping seasons. The peasant with surplus grain was ever ready to lend to the less fortunate neighbours, for it was an insurance against his own impoverishment in the future.[21]
In some cases, peasants lost their lands to the money lenders.[22] On such

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[18] Administration Reports, Western Province, CO: 57/99/1886.
[19] Van Den Driesen, I. H. *Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823-1886*,p.178 and Roberts, Michael. 'Aspects of Ceylon's Agrarian Economy in the Nineteenth Century', p. 163.
[20] Gunawardene, Elaine. *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p. 2.
[21] Pieris, Ralph. 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p. 64.
[22] There are references to the professional lenders since ancient times. They used to lend either in kind or in money. A trade guild lent paddy to the farmers on interest in the late Anuradhapura period. When someone wanted to borrow money, the recipient himself or a family member was mortgaged to the lender and worked for him until the debt was paid off. In the Kandyan period, paddy was lent at the rate of 50 per cent per year for

occasions, some villagers might have lost their long-term source of self reliance earnings in the village economy. We may surmise that, when a family fell below the long-term minimum self-reliance level, they became residential labourers on the plantations. With the maturity of plantation economy, the number of families whose long-term average earnings fell below the minimum subsistence level began to increase. The expansion of the plantations in the wet zone created an unprecedented pressure on the limited supply of land. In addition, the rapid population increase in the nineteenth century further aggravated the pressure on limited agricultural resources.[23] 'The expansion of plantations combined with a steady growth in population had led to the emergence of a class whose land holdings were inadequate for subsistence or who held no land at all.'[24] This might have pushed a considerable number of families below the long-term subsistence level in the village economy, especially in the plantation areas where the competition was intense for the limited land. Some of them might have become residential labourers on the plantations, while the rest were absorbed into the urban population or took advantage of casual labourer opportunities offered by the new economy. The following situations on estates may have originated from such circumstances. 'Several gangs of low-country Sinhalese came into the district in search of work towards the middle of the year, and a good many are now employed on estates;...'[25] 'It is worth notice that villagers now offer their service on estates and in one case that I know of a gang of Sinhalese are now resident in the lines, and are treated in every way as Tamil coolies are.'[26]

If the natives developed money consciousness and rationality they should have shown an interest in investing in the plantations. The Ceylon economy prior to the establishment of coffee plantations was largely self-sufficient and of a subsistence type; the marked. characteristic of this nature of the

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the first two years and no interest accrued thereafter There were also moneylenders during this period. Some were related to the Nayakkar kings and others were Moormen They were authorised to charge 20 per cent interest by the king see de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* p 53, De Silva, W A 'A contribution to the Study of Economic and Social Organization in Ceylon in Early Times', pp 73-74, Pieris, Ralph 'A Note on Pre-capitalist Economic Formations in the Kandyan Kingdom', p 67

[23] Rajaratnam, S. *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber,* 1961, p vi

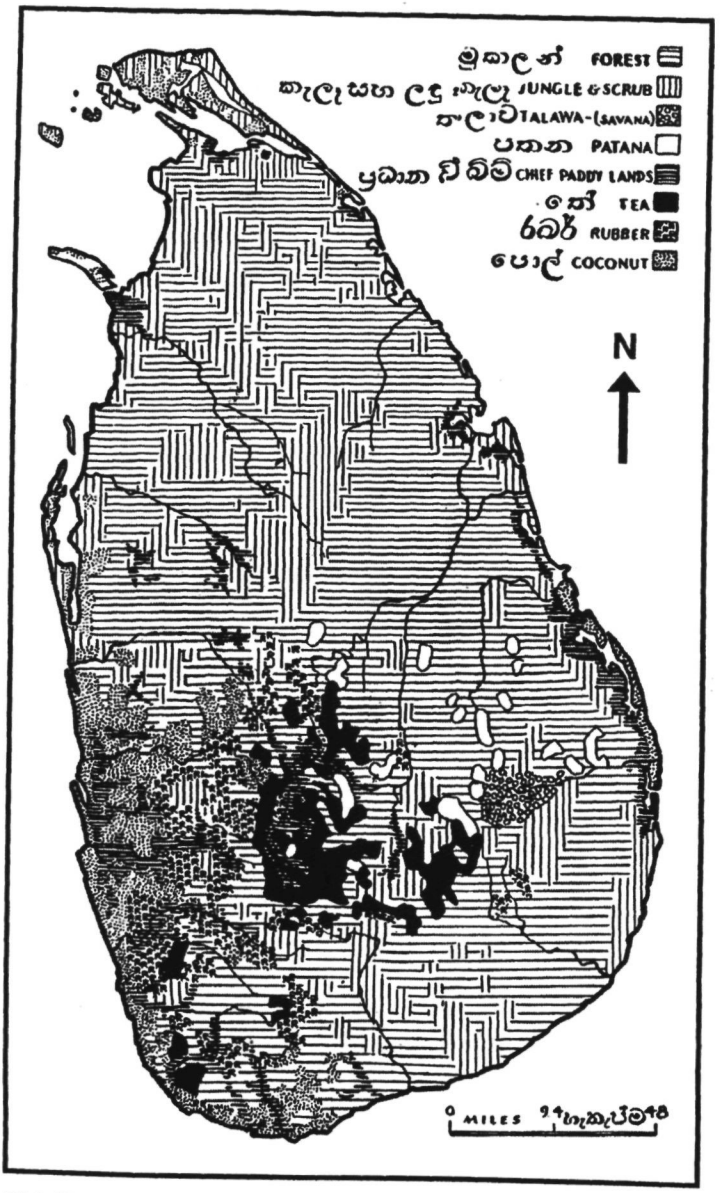
[24] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History,* p 158

[25] Administration Reports, Sabaragamuwa- Province, CO 57/199/1918

[26] Administration Report of the Government Agent, Central Province, 1886, p 23, Colombo, 1887; quoted in Meegama, S A *The Decline in the Mortality in Ceylon, with Particular Reference to Economic and social Development,* p. 105

MAP 12

Vegetation of Ceylon-1953



Source: Elsie K. Cook (1931). *Ceylon: Its Geography, Its Recources and Its People,* (Rev. by K.Kularatnam), Macmillan, London, 1953

economy was the absence of domestic capital or enterprise.[27] But the natives' capital and entrepreneurship developed as time passed. The development of an indigenous entrepreneurial class owes much to the rise of the plantation economy.[28] 'With the steady expansion of plantations Ceylonese too became interested in export agriculture.[29] Some peasants converted their grain cultivating lands into the growing of export crops.

> 'With the expansion of money economy, the supply of domestic capital was becoming available for investments in export agriculture At the same time the Ceylonese were becoming aware of the new markets and therefore willing to undertake risk, as the success of foreign capital exerted a kind of demonstration effect on local capital and enterprise was strongly evident in first quarter of the twentieth century, when new movement in land, especially in rubber plantations took place at an increasing rate '[30]

As a result of these changes, newly created local entrepreneurs began to play an important role in the plantation sector. 'In the late nineteenth century the major purchasers of crown lands were local entrepreneurs. It has been estimated that between 1868 and 1900 non-Europeans bought 72 per cent of the crown land sold Wealth to purchase this land had been earned partly by providing services to estates...'[31] Coconut and the rubber were more in the natives' hands than in those of foreign investors. During and after the First World War native commercial enterprises in coconuts and rubber took root and began to flourish. By 1931 the Ceylon peasant was the major owner of the island's coconut acreage, and also owned a substantial area under rubber.[32]

The native labour supply in the plantations, especially in coffee and tea, never reached an appreciable percentage, although the absolute figure did increase over time. However, the natives were numerous on the coconut and, to a greater extent, on the rubber plantations. The former had been an intrinsic part of the traditional village economy. Rubber was the youngest of all the major plantations in the island. When it was introduced, Ceylonese society was commercially mature enough to contribute its fair

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[27] Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p 25

[28] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 12

[29] Gunawardene, Elaine *External Trade and economic Structure of Ceylon 1900-1955*, p 2

[30] ibid , p 25

[31] de Silva, Chandra Richard *Sri Lanka A History*, p 166

[32] Rajaratnam, S *History of Plantation Agriculture of Ceylon, 1886-1931 with special reference to tea and rubber*, p vii

share of investment and also to the labour supply. As far as working the plantation was concerned, the native was always interested in doing so as long as he remained living in his own village. He always wanted to maintain his strong bond with his ancestral land and village society.

In the early days of the plantations, the Ceylonese appear to have had good reason for not working on the coffee or subsequent tea plantations. They might have calculated the opportunity cost of selling their labour to the plantation; not only in financial terms, but also in relation to other aspects of village life; work satisfaction and freedom, exigencies of work, and the risk of losing the strong bond with the village and of becoming alienated from the ownership of land. When the conditions were right, the Ceylonese were prepared to supply labour to the plantations. The same applied to the Ceylonese investments in the plantations. The local investors played the leading role in the later stages of the plantation economy.

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Samenvatting

Consumptie-studies hebben in de afgelopen jaren aan kracht gewonnen en worden in een aantal sociaal-wetenschappelijke disciplines populair. In dit proefschrift wordt getracht de rol van consumptie in de historische economische transformatie die in Europese koloniën plaats vond, opnieuw te onderzoeken. Het Britse Ceylon fungeert hierbij als *case study*. Hoewel de theoretische discussie sterk geënt is op de economische wetenschap, worden andere sociale wetenschappen hierin ook betrokken. Ook de bespreking van de *case study* gaat vaak verder dan puur en alleen economische zaken. De empirische informatie voor het onderzoek is vooral verzameld in verschillende koloniale archieven.

Na een kort overzicht van literatuur op het gebied van ontwikkelingstheorieën en ontwikkeling, begint het proefschrift met een onderzoek naar de rationele consument, consumptie en de consumptie-theorieën, zoals die te vinden zijn in de hedendaagse economische wetenschap. Dit wordt gevolgd door een alternatief analytisch kader dat tot doel heeft om de historische wortels van de huidige economische onderontwikkeling te achterhalen. Het is er vooral op gericht om de theoretische relatie tussen veranderingen in consumptiepatronen en economische ontwikkeling te leggen. Het vertrekpunt hierbij is consumptie in tegenstelling tot bestaande theorieën die hun analyse beginnen bij productie.

De *case study* begint met een nauwkeurig onderzoek van de traditionele consumptiepatronen in Ceylon van vóór het Britse bestuur. Ze begint bij de eerste in de geschiedenis vermelde koning van het eiland en vervolgt dan via het maritieme bestuur van de Portugezen, de Nederlanders en, tot slot, de onderwerping van het laatste Singalese koninkrijk van Kandy door de Britten. De traditionele consumptiepatronen op het eiland bleven gedurende deze hele periode overwegend bestaan. Zij zijn de uitdrukking van de subsistentie-economie in het alternatieve analytische kader.

De veranderingen die in de traditionele consumptiepatronen van het eiland teweeg zijn gebracht tijdens het Britse bestuur, worden uitgebreid geanalyseerd. Het gaat hierbij vooral om de consumptie van rijst, granen, tarwebloem, suiker in verschillende vormen, fruit en groente, vis en vlees, (sterke) dranken, gezondheids- en hygiënische artikelen, verlichting en schoonmaakmiddelen, textiel, kleding en sieraden, huizen en huishoudelijke artikelen. In enkele bijlagen aan het eind van het proefschrift worden een aantal zaken belicht die betrekking hebben op

consumptie en economische onderontwikkeling van het eiland. De veranderingen in consumptiegoederen en -diensten in de onderzochte periode worden bekeken tegen het licht van de belangrijkste aspecten van de veranderingen in consumptiepatronen en de reacties hierop door consumenten, zoals dit in het alternatieve analytisch kader is uiteengezet. De voornaamste aspecten van de veranderingen in consumptie, of de ex-ante analyses, worden aangeduid onder de noemer van verlegging van consumptie, creatie van consumptie, verstorende consumptie en uitputtende consumptie. De reacties hierop, of de ex-post analyses, worden benoemd als vijandige reactie, creatieve reactie, aanpassende reactie en vruchteloze reactie.

In de conclusies van het proefschrift wordt de empirische informatie vergeleken met het alternatieve analytische kader. De mate waarin veranderingen in het consumptiepatroon de allocatie van hulpbronnen, productie en economische groei/ontwikkeling beïnvloeden, wordt onderzocht. Daarbij wordt in het bijzonder aandacht besteed aan de vraag of belangrijke veranderingen die door dit proces zijn voortgebracht, overeenkomen met internationale handelstheorieën zoals die gangbaar zijn in de hedendaagse economie. De conclusie is dat er redelijke gronden zijn om te stellen dat de veranderingen in consumptiepatronen bijgedragen hebben aan de economische onderontwikkeling van het Britse Ceylon. De historische ervaringen op het gebied van consumptie van een aantal andere landen zijn in het theoretisch kader en ook in de conclusies, meegenomen om de argumenten te versterken.

Curriculum Vitae

Wijitapure Wimalaratana was born in Kekirawa, the North-Central province of Sri Lanka. He received his primary education at Padikaramaduwa Maha Vidyalaya in Huruluwewa and Sri Parakramabahu Pirivena in Sirigala, Dambadeniya. After successfully completing secondary education at Saraswathi Pirivena in Balagalla, he attended the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka and took the BA special degree in Economics, specialising in Monetary Economics (1978-1982). He followed a Postgraduate Diploma Course in Economic Development(1987/1988) at the University of Colombo before he finished his MA in Economics, specialising in International Economics (1991/1992) at the same university. He started his career as a teacher in Sunethra Mahadevi Pirivena (degree college) of Pepiliyana before joining the academic staff of the Department of Economics, University of Colombo in 1990. He has teaching experience in tertiary level college courses, undergraduate courses and postgraduate diploma courses. He has been involved in a number of research projects. He was offered a scholarship by the UC-ISS project to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He is still a member of the academic staff of the Department of Economics, University of Colombo. Wijitapure Wimalaratana is a Buddhist priest.

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There is a long historical tradition of interpreting the socio-economic transformation from different perspectives. It is still going on and will continue further. Nevertheless, the social sciences have traditionally ignored consumer studies, although there have recently been some signs of change. However, there are hardly any standard theories in the social sciences to which to relate the long-term socio-economic impact of changes in consumer behavior in a country. This study basically investigates the historical transformation of economic underdevelopment in British Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) from the perspective of consumption. The pre-British consumption pattern in the island has been taken as the point of departure in the case study. An alternative theoretical framework has been formulated to examine the changes brought about in the consumption pattern and its economic impact during the British colonial administration in the island. The case study is preceded by an in-depth review of the literature on the consumer and consumption in economics, major consumer theories and concepts, and economic underdevelopment.

The 'Nijmeegs Instituut voor Comparatieve Cultuur- en Ontwikkelingsstudies' (NICCOS - Nijmegen Institute for Comparative Studies in Development and Cultural Change) of the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, was established in 1989 in order to co-ordinate and stimulate the research in the Third World and in peripheral regions of the industrialized countries carried out by the Departments of Cultural and Social Anthropology, the Department of Geography of Developing Areas, the Third World Centre, the Centre for Women's Studies, the Missiology Department and the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures.